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SELECT POEMS

TENNYSON - BROWNING

EDITED BY

W. J. ALEXANDER

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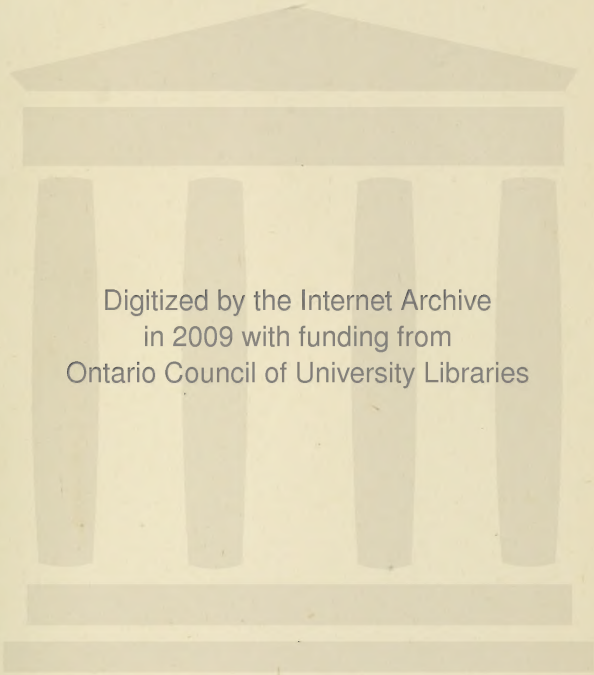

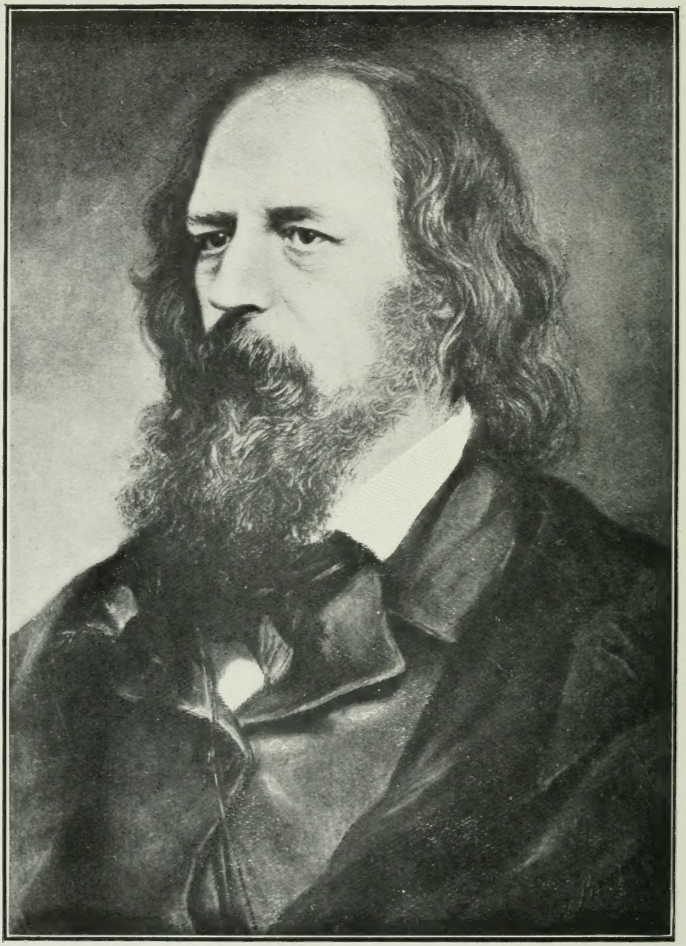

Tennyson.

SELECT POEMS

PRESCRIBED FOR THE JUNIOR MATRICULATION, AND FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE NORMAL SCHOOLS AND FACULTIES OF EDUCATION,

1914.

EDITED WITH BRIEF NOTES.

BY

W. J. ALEXANDER, PH.D.,

Professor of English in University College, Toronto.

TORONTO:

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CONTENTS.

TENNYSON.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot;
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott.'

PART II.

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,

Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:

And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,

And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

ST. AGNES' EVE.

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon :
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within

For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
  To make me pure of sin,
The sabbaths of Eternity,
  One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!

'COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD.'

Come not, when I am dead,
  To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
  And vex the unhappy dust thou would'st not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry:
    But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
  I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
  And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie:
    Go by, go by.

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK."

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

ELAINE.

Elaine the fair, Elaine the loveable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam:
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon

All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day
Leaving her household and good father climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur when none knew from whence he came,
Long ere the people chose him for their king,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonnesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together; but there names were lost.

And each had slain his brother at a blow,
And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd:
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into colour with the crags:
And one of these, the king, had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights,
Saying "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's not the king's—
For public use: henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of these:
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The Heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he spoke:
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen,
When all were won; but meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "you know it."
"Then will you miss," he answer'd, "the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight you love to look on." And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded, and a heart,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen
(However much he yearn'd to make complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
"Sir King, my ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle;" and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she began.

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame.
Why go you not to these fair jousts? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, Lo the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful king is gone!"
Then Lancelot vext at having lied in vain:
"Are you so wise? you were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer, when you loved me first.
Then of the crowd you took no more account

Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the king
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh.
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself: but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the colour: I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as you know, save by the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights,
"And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honours his own word,
As if it were his God's?"
"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing your are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our true king
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him true,
You know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than himself:
They prove to him his work: win and return."
Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself: not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made and wound the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat

With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
There was not: some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approach'd them: then the Lord of Astolat:
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the king, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights.
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,
Hereafter you shall know me—and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat, "Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His you can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
"Yea since I cannot use it, you may have it."
Here laugh'd the father saying, "Fie, Sir Churl.
Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him: but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
"For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre :
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go :
A jest, no more : for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike ; and then I said
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
But, father, give me leave, and if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight :
Win shall I not, but do my best to win :
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So you will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend ;
And you shall win this diamond—as I hear,
It is a fair large diamond,—if you may,
And yield it to this maiden, if you will."
"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
"Such be for Queens and not for simple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd :
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only Queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased : the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it : but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in Hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind :
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answer'd he :
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,

The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
"He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."
"O there, great Lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
O tell us; for we live apart, you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four wild battles by the shore
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By castle Gurnion where the glorious King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carved of one emerald, center'd in a sun
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
Saying, his knights are better men than he—
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives
No greater leader."
While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
"Save your great self, fair lord;" and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—
Being mirthful he but in a stately kind—
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature: and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and colour of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought

She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating :
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
That he should wear her favour at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
"Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,
I well believe, the noblest—will you wear
My favour at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favour of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know."
"Yea, so," she answer'd ; "then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you." And he turn'd
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd, "True, my child.
Well, I will wear it : fetch it out to me :
What is it?" and she told him "A red sleeve
Broider'd with pearls," and brought it : then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile

Saying, "I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine;
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your Squire."
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your colour back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed:"
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away: she stay'd a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
Paused in the gateway, standing by the shield
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.

Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd,
And ever labouring had scoop'd himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,
And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;

The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs ;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away :
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?"
And after muttering "The great Lancelot,"
At last he got his breath and answer'd, "One,
One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's king of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there—then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found

The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work :
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.
Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said,
"Me you call great : mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance : but there is many a youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it ; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great :
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew ; and then did either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker ; then he hurl'd into it
Against the stronger : little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory : King, duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot ; and one said to the other, "Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force alone,
The grace and versatility of the man—
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot worn

Favour of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know."
"How then? who then?" a fury seized on them,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
And him that helms it, so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt, and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully,
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party,—tho' it seemed half-miracle
To those he fought with—drave his kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the heralds blew
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights,
His party, cried "Advance, and take your prize
The diamond;" but he answer'd, "Diamond me
No diamond! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-head:"
"Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
But he, "I die already with it: draw—
Draw"—and Lavaine drew, and that other gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,
Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
"Lo, Sire, our knight thro' whom we won the day
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the King "that such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-day—
He seem'd to me another Lancelot—
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—
He must not pass uncared for. Gawain, rise,
My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:

His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
No customary honour: since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Wherefore take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us what he is and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest, until you find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took,
And gave, the diamond: then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince,
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint
And Lamorack, a good knight, but therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the king's command to sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Past, thinking "Is it Lancelot who has come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and has added wound to wound,
And ridd'n away to die?" So fear'd the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"
"Nay, but one like him." "Why that like was he."

And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said, "Lord, no sooner had you parted from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, ev'n the king, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd:
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory.'"
Then replied the King:
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he has trusted you.
Surely his king and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own kin—
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, these!
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field:
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift."
"Yea, lord," she said,
"Your hopes are mine," and saying that she choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,

Moved to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shriek'd out "Traitor" to the unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
Glanced at, and cried, "What news from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?" "He won."
"I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts
Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand: well-nigh she swoon'd:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
The lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
The victor, but had ridden wildly round
To seek him, and was wearied of the search.
To whom the lord of Astolat, "Bide with us,
And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;
This will he send or come for: furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it.
And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine:
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
From forehead down to foot perfect—again

From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :
" Well—if I bide, lo ! this wild flower for me !"
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him, " Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name ? Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt him at, and went
To all the winds ?" " Nay, by mine head," said he,
" I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes :
But an you will it, let me see the shield."
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd ;
" Right was the King ! our Lancelot ! that true man !"
" And right was I," she answer'd merrily, " I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all."
" And if *I* dream'd," said Gawain, " that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon ! lo, you know it !
Speak therefore : shall I waste myself in vain ?"
Full simple was her answer, " What know I ?
My brethren have been all my fellowship,
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,
Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so myself—
I know not if I know what true love is,

But if I know, then, if I love not him,
Methinks there is none other I can love."
"Yea, by God's death," said he, "you love him well,
But would not, knew you what all others know,
And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved away:
But he pursued her, calling, "Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace? he wore your sleeve:
Would he break faith with one I may not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
May it be so? why then, far be it from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also: here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times!—a thousand time farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,
So you will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other."
Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt;
But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid,

Whose sleeve he wore ; she loves him ; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond : she will render it ;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
"Too courteous truly ? you shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that you forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him ;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed :
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's point with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder flared :
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen who sat
With lips severely placid felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore let me hence,"
She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"You will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, whereso'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as you know,
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence
I pray you." Then her father nodding said,
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit you well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a Queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,
"Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself and echoed in her heart,
"Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers:
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How know you my lord's name is Lancelot?"
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,
Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laugh'd,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
And when they gain'd the cell in which he slept,

His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Uttered a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying
"Your prize the diamond sent you by the King:"
His eyes glisten'd: she fancied "Is it for me?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.
At once she slipt like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride has wearied you.
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colours on her simple face;
And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
And being weak in body said no more;
But did not love the colour; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
And past beneath the wildly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;

There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and past
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave: so day by day she past
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him,
And likewise many a night: and Lancelot
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.

These, as but born of sickness, could not live:
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
Full often the sweet image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must I die?"
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"
And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And "Him or death," she mutter'd, "death or him,"
Again and like a burthen, "Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers; "and do not shun

To speak the wish most near to your true heart ;
Such service have you done me, that I make
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it ; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
He said, " Delay no longer, speak your wish,
Seeing I must go to-day : " then out she brake ;
" Going ? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."
" Speak : that I live to hear," he said, " is yours."
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke :
" I have gone mad, I love you : let me die."
" Ah sister," answer'd Lancelot, " what is this ? "
And innocently extending her white arms,
" Your love," she said, " your love—to be your wife."
And Lancelot answer'd, " Had I chos'n to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine :
But now there never will be wife of mine."
" No, no," she cried, " I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."
And Lancelot answer'd, " Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation—nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness." And she said,
" Not to be with you, not to see your face—
Alas for me then, my good days are done."

"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten times nay!
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea I know it of mine own self:
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy: furthermore,
Ev'n to the death, as tho' you were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied:
"Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father. "Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
"That were against me: what I can I will;"
And there that day remain'd, and towards even
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield:
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,

Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound ;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat :
His very shield was gone ; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
" Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, " Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd ; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song " The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it : sweetly could she make and sing.

" Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain ;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain :
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

" Love, art thou sweet ? then bitter death must be :
Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face and thought
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when you used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only you would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there you fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because you would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the king.

And yet you would not; but this night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will:'
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the king.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bad a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went nor bad me one:
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, you seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would you look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,
"I never loved him: an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down,
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To which the gentle sister made reply,
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd, echoing "highest?"
(He meant to break the passion in her) "nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
And she returns his love in open shame.
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat;
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger: these are slanders: never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return:
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd
'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And fold d, "O sweet father, tender and true,

Deny me not," she said—" you never yet
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,
My latest : lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it ; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased : her father promised ; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,

Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her
"Sister, farewell for ever," and again
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, "Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,
I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumours be:
When did not rumours fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied.

"It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
I doubt not that however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful: and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's queen I move and rule:
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—
She shall not have them."
Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream,
Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disgust
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in the blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd
"What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,
"He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to fairy land?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into fairy land."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turn'd the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.
So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself and pitied her:
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,

And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan.
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."
Thus he read,
And ever in the reading, lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all;
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and I bad her no farewell.
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help'd her from herself."
Then said the Queen
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)
"You might at least have done her so much grace,

Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding,
"Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,
It will be to your worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshall'd order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a Queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon.
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage

For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, "Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven,"
But Arthur who beheld his cloudy brows
Approach'd him, and with full affection flung
One arm about his neck, and spake and said:

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most love and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight,
And let the younger and unskill'd go by
To win his honour and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved;—but now I would to God,
For the wild people say wild things of thee,
Thou could'st have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."
Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.

To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freëst," said the King.
"Let love be free; free love is for the best:
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself, "Ah simple heart and sweet,
You loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love?'
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the lake
Stole from his mother—as the story runs—
She chanted snatches of mysterious song
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
She kiss'd me saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,

As a king's son,' and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me: not without
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? Nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

BROWNING.

SONG.

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly He trod
Paradise, His presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event!" Why "small?"
Costs it more pain this thing ye call
A "great event" should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in, or exceed!

(From *Pippa Passes.*)

CAVALIER TUNES.

I. MARCHING ALONG.

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take, nor sup,
Till you're—

CHORUS.—*Marching along, fifty score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well!
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,

CHO.—*Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song?

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

CHO.—*March we along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

II. GIVE A ROUSE.

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?

CHO.—*King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's damned troopers shot him?

CHO.—*King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III. BOOT AND SADDLE.

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray.
CHO.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—
CHO.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
CHO.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?
CHO.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

MY LAST DUCHESS.

FERRARA.

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)

And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. O sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

Morning, evening, noon and night,
"Praise God!" sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period
He stopped and sang, "Praise God!"

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, "Well done;
"I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

"As well as if thy voice to-day
"Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
"Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I
"Might praise him, that great way, and die!"

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, "Nor day nor night
"Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew:
The man put off the stripling's hue:

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay:

And ever o'er the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear;
"There is no doubt in it, no fear:

"So sing old worlds, and so
"New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways:
"I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day ; he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite.

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed ;

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer :

And rising from the sickness drear
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

" I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell
" And set thee here : I did not well.

" Vainly I left my angel-sphere,
" Vain was thy dream of many a year.

" Thy voice's praise seemed weak ; it dropped—
" Creation's chorus stopped !

" Go back and praise again
" The early way, while I remain.

" With that weak voice of our disdain
" Take up creation's pausing strain.

"Back to the cell and poor employ:
"Resume the craftsman and the boy!

Theocrite grew old at home
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died:
They sought God side by side.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

I.

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

II.

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY.

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY.)

I.

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square ;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there !

II.

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least !
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast ;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

III.

Well now, look at our villa ! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull !
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

IV.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the houses ! Why ?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye !
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry ;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by ;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high ;
And the shops with fanciful signs, which are painted properly.

V.

What of a villa ? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'T is May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights :

You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

VI.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

VII.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foambows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of a sash.

VIII.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted fore-finger.
Some think fire-flies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,

And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

IX.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin :
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in :
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth ;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot !
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's !
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome, and Cicero
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhyming,) "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession ! our Lady borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart !
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife ;
No keeping one's haunches still : it's the greatest pleasure in life.

X.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

I.

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep,
Half-asleep,
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

II.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one,)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

III.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame:
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

IV.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—

Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

V.

And I know, while thus the quiet colored eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

VI.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

VII.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold of course!
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

A PICTURE AT FANO.

I.

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

II.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
—And suddenly my head is covered o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays
Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

III.

I would not look up thither past thy head
  Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
  Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
  Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garments spread?

IV.

If this was ever granted, I would rest
  My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
  Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
  And all lay quiet, happy, and suppressed.

V.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
  I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
  After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
  What further may be sought for or declared?

VI.

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
  (Alfred, dear friend!)—that little child to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to each
  Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away
Over the earth where so much lay before him
Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
  And he was left at Fano by the beach.

VII.

We were at Fano, and three times we went
To sit and see him in his chapel there,
And drink his beauty to our soul's content
—My angel with me too : and since I care
For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
And glory comes this picture for a dower,
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent)—

VIII.

And since he did not work thus earnestly
At all times, and has else endured some wrong—
I took one thought his picture struck from me,
And spread it out, translating it to song.
My Love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

PROSPICE.

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe ;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go :
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!

I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forebore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

NOTES ON TENNYSON.

Alfred Tennyson was the third son of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, rector of Somersby, a small village in Lincolnshire not far from the sea-coast. Though in the neighbourhood of the fen country, Somersby itself lies "in a pretty pastoral district of sloping hills and large ash trees." "To the north rises the long peak of the wold, with its steep white road that climbs the hill above Thetford; to the south, the land slopes gently to a small deep-channelled brook, which rises not far from Somersby and flows just below the parsonage garden." The scenery of his native village and its neighbourhood, where he spent his youth and early manhood,—the scenery of wold, and fen, and sandy coast—made a deep impress on the poet's mind, and is reflected again and again in his earlier writings. In the parsonage of Somersby, which was then the only considerable house in the little hamlet, Alfred was born August 6th, 1809. His father was a man of ability, with intellectual and artistic interests; books were at hand, and the three elder boys not only became great readers, but from childhood were accustomed to write original verses. The life of the Tennysons was a somewhat secluded one; Alfred was naturally shy, with a bent towards solitary and imaginative pursuits. These tendencies may have been fostered by the character of his early education. He was not sent to a great public school, like most English boys of his class, but attended the village school at Somersby, then the grammar school at the neighbouring town of Louth, and was finally prepared for entering college by home tuition. Already before he had become an undergraduate, he was an author, having, along with his elder brother Charles, written a volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers*, which was published at Louth in 1827 by a local bookseller. The work is creditable to such youthful poets (the poems contributed by Alfred were composed between his fifteenth and his seventeenth year), but more remarkable for the absence of marked immaturity than for the presence of positive merits. The breadth of the authors' reading is attested by quotations prefixed to the various pieces: Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Terence, Lucretius, Sallust, Tacitus, Byron, Cowper, Gray, Hume, Moore, Scott, Beattie and Addison being all put under contribution.

In 1828 Charles and Alfred entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where the eldest brother, Frederick, was already a student. There the Tenny-

sons were associated with some of the most brilliant and promising of their contemporaries. Alfred formed an especially warm friendship with Arthur Henry Hallam, a young man of extraordinary endowments, whose premature death he subsequently commemorated in *In Memoriam*. In 1829 Tennyson won the Chancellor's prize for English verse by a poem on "Timbuctoo," where for the first time in his work, there is some promise of future excellence, and some faint touches of his later style. Next year his poetic career may be said really to have begun with a small volume entitled *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, which in such poems as *Claribel*, *The Dying Swan*, *Mariana*, and *The Poet*, clearly exhibits some of his characteristic qualities. The volume was favourably reviewed by Leigh Hunt and Hallam, but severely criticized by "Christopher North" in *Blackwood*. In the same year the author embarked on a very different undertaking, going with Hallam to Spain in order to carry, to the revolutionists there, money and letters from English sympathizers. In 1831 his college career was brought to a close by the death of his father, and he returned to Somersby. Here he completed a second volume of poems, published in 1832. This marks another advance in poetic art, and contains some of his most characteristic pieces: *The Lady of Shalott*, *Oenone*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Two Voices*. It should be remembered, however, that several of these do not now appear in their original form, and that much of their perfection is due to revisions later than 1832. This volume, as well as its predecessor, was severely criticized, especially by the *Quarterly*. But although in this article justice was not done to the merits of the volume, the strictures upon defects were in the main well grounded, as the poet himself tacitly acknowledged by omitting or amending in subsequent editions the objectionable passages. Another result of the hostility of the critics was that Tennyson, who was always morbidly sensitive to criticism even from the most friendly source, ceased publishing for almost ten years, except that verses from his pen occasionally appeared in the pages of Literary Annuals. This ten-years silence is characteristic of the man, of his self-restraint and power of patient application—potent factors in the ultimate perfection of his work.

The sudden death of his friend Hallam, in September 1833, plunged Tennyson for a time in profound sorrow, but was doubtless effective in maturing and deepening his emotional and intellectual life. The poet's sister had been betrothed to Hallam; over the household at Somersby, of which Alfred, in the absence of his elder brothers,

was now the head, there gathered a deep gloom. The feelings and ideas which centred about this great sorrow of his youthful days, the poet soon began to embody in short lyrics; these through successive years grew in number and variety, and finally took shape in what by many is considered Tennyson's greatest work, *In Memoriam*.

It was in 1836, when Charles Tennyson was married to Louisa Sellwood, that in all probability Alfred fell in love with the bride's sister, to whom in course of time he became engaged. The small fortune which he had inherited was insufficient to provide a maintenance for a married pair; poetry, to which he had devoted his life, seemed unlikely ever to yield him a sufficient income. Yet, characteristically enough, Tennyson neither attempted to find a more lucrative profession, nor even departed from his resolve to refrain from again seeking public notice until his genius and his work had become fully matured. In consequence, the friends of his betrothed put an end to the correspondence of the lovers; and a long period of trial began for the poet, when his prospects in love, in worldly fortune, in poetic success, seemed almost hopelessly overcast. In 1837 the family removed from Somersby to High Beech in Epping Forest, then to Tunbridge Wells, and then to the neighbourhood of Maidstone. The change of residence brought Tennyson into closer proximity with the capital, and henceforward, he frequently resorted thither to visit old friends like Spedding, and gradually became personally known in the literary circles of London. Among other notable men he met with Carlyle, found pleasure in the company of this uncouth genius and his clever wife, and, in turn, was regarded with unusual favour by a keen-eyed and censorious pair of critics. Tennyson was one of the very few distinguished men whose personality impressed Carlyle favourably. The account which the latter gives of Tennyson in a letter to Emerson, dated August 1844, is worth quoting at length:—

"Moxon informs me that Tennyson is now in Town, and means to come and see me. Of this latter result I shall be very glad. Alfred is one of the few British and Foreign Figures (a not increasing number, I think!) who are and remain beautiful to me—a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother! However, I doubt he will not come; he often skips me in these brief visits to Town; skips everybody, indeed; being a man solitary and sad, as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom,—carrying a bit of chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos. Alfred is the son of a Lincolnshire Gentleman Farmer, I think; indeed you see in his verses that he is a native of 'moated granges,' and green flat pastures, not of mountains and their torrents and storms. He had his breeding at Cambridge, as for the Law or Church; being master of a small annuity on his Father's decease, he preferred clubbing with his Mother and some

Sisters, to live unpromoted and write poems. In this way he lives still, now here, now there: the family always within reach of London, never in it; he himself making rare and brief visits, lodging in some old comrade's rooms. I think he must be under forty—not much under it. One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of rough, dusty-dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical metallic—fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous: I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe! We shall see what he will grow to. He is often unwell; very chaotic—his way is through Chaos and the Bottomless and Pathless; not handy for making out many miles upon."

Meanwhile, in 1842, two years before this letter was written, Tennyson gave conclusive evidence of the power that was in him, by the publication of two volumes containing, in the first place, a selection from the poems of 1830 and of 1832, and, secondly, a large number of new pieces. Among the latter are *Morte d'Arthur*, *Ulysses*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, *The Talking Oak*, *Locksley Hall*, *Dora*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, *St. Agnes' Eve*, "Break, break, break," and the three poems "You ask me why," "Of old sat Freedom," "Love thou thy land." Such pieces as these represent the mature art of their author, and some of them he never surpassed. It was about the time of the publication of these volumes that the fortunes of their author reached their lowest point. The failure of a manufacturing scheme in which he had invested all his means left him penniless. "Then followed," says his son and biographer, "a season of real hardship, and many trials for my father and mother, since marriage seemed to be further off than ever. So severe a hypochondria set in upon him that his friends despaired of his life. 'I have,' he writes, 'drunk one of those most bitter draughts out of the cup of life, which go near to make men hate the world they live in.'" But, at length, the fates became propitious. In the first place the excellence of the collected poems of 1842 rapidly won general recognition; during his ten years of silence Tennyson's reputation had been steadily growing, the two volumes of 1842 set it upon a firm basis. From that day onward, he held the first place in general estimation among contemporary poets. In 1845 Wordsworth pronounced him "decidedly the first of our living poets"; in the same year the fourth edition of the *Poems* of 1842 was called for, and the publisher, Moxon, said that Tennyson was the only poet by the publication of whose works he had not been a loser. Further, in 1845, the prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, through the intervention of Tennyson's old college friend Milnes (Lord Houghton), conferred upon him a pension of £200

a year. This was a timely relief to pecuniary difficulties which were at this date very embarrassing. *The Princess*, his first long work, was published in 1847. Through a fanciful story of a Princess who founds a university for women, it gave a poetical presentation and solution of the 'woman question'; but rather disappointed, at the time, the high expectations excited by the earlier writings. On the other hand, *In Memoriam*, which appeared in 1850, has from the beginning been considered one of the finest products of his genius. It consists of a series of lyrics giving utterance to various moods and thoughts to which the great sorrow of his youth had given birth. These had been carefully elaborated during a long period, are extraordinarily finished in their expression and are fuller of substance than any other of the more ambitious works of their author. No other poem so adequately represents the current thought and average attitude of Tennyson's generation in regard to many of the great problems of the time. In the year of the publication of *In Memoriam*, the laureateship, rendered vacant by the death of Wordsworth, was bestowed upon its author. In the same year his marriage with Emily Sellwood took place. They had been separated from one another for ten years; Tennyson's age was forty-one, the bride's thirty-seven. But their fidelity was rewarded. "The peace of God," Tennyson said, "came into my life before the altar when I married her"; and indeed the remainder of the poet's long life, apart from the death in the first years of manhood of his second son, is a record of happiness and success such as does not fall to the lot of many men.

After a tour in Italy the Tennysons in 1853 took up their residence at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, which was henceforth their home, and the poet entered upon a period of sure and increasing popularity and growing worldly prosperity. He never relaxed, however, even in advanced old age, his strenuous poetic industry; hence a long series of works of a high order of merit, of which we will mention only the more important. In 1855, *Maud*, a lyrical monodrama, was published, about which critical opinion was then and still remains greatly divided, though the poet himself regarded it with special favour. In 1857, Bayard Taylor visited Tennyson at his home and records his impressions: "He is tall and broad-shouldered as a son of Anak, with hair, beard, and eyes of Southern darkness. Something in the lofty brow and aquiline nose suggests Dante, but such a deep, mellow chest-voice never could have come from Italian lungs. He proposed a walk, as the day was wonderfully clear and beautiful. We climbed the steep comb

of the chalk cliff, and slowly wandered westward until we reached the Needles, at the extremity of the Island, and some three or four miles distant from his residence. During the conversation with which we beguiled the way, I was struck with the variety of his knowledge. Not a little flower on the downs, which the sheep had spared, escaped his notice, and the geology of the coast, both terrestrial and submarine, were perfectly familiar to him. I thought of a remark that I had once heard from the lips of a distinguished English author [Thackeray] that Tennyson was the wisest man he knew."

Tennyson, as such poems as *The Lady of Shalott* and *Morte d'Arthur* show, had been early attracted by the legendary tales of King Arthur, which to several poets had seemed a rich storehouse of poetical material. About the year 1857 he began to occupy himself specially with these legends ; and from this time on until the middle seventies his chief energy was given to the composition of a series of poems from these sources, which were ultimately arranged to form a composite whole, entitled the *Idylls of the King*. These poems proved very acceptable to the general taste, and the poet began to reap a fortune from the sale of his works. Of the volume published in 1862, entitled *Enoch Arden*, which mainly consisted of English Idyls, sixty thousand copies were rapidly sold. This, perhaps, marks the height of his popularity.

In 1875 he entered on a new field with the publication of an historical drama, *Queen Mary*, followed in 1876 by a similar work, *Harold*, and by other dramatic pieces in later years. In the drama Tennyson was less successful than in any other department which he attempted, and this lack of success gave rise to a widespread feeling that his powers were now in decline. Such a conclusion was most decisively negatived by the appearance of *Ballads and Other Poems* in 1880, where he returned to less ambitious and lengthy but more congenial forms—a collection which Mr. Theodore Watts terms "the most richly various volume of English verse that has appeared in [Tennyson's] century." At intervals until the very close of his long life, he produced similar miscellaneous collections of poems: *Tiresias and Other Poems*, 1885, *Demeter and Other Poems*, 1889, *The Death of Oenone and Other Poems*, 1892. Some of the pieces contained in these miscellanies were doubtless the gleanings of earlier years ; but in others there were qualities which clearly showed them to be the

products of a new epoch in a genius that went on changing and developing even in advanced old age. In the most characteristic pieces, *The Revenge*, *The Relief of Lucknow*, *Rizpah*, *Vastness*, etc., there is a vigour and dramatic force absent in his earlier work, with less of that minute finish and elaborate perfection of phrase which is so often his chief merit. On the other hand, in *Freedom*, *To Virgil*, and *Crossing the Bar*, we have poems in the more familiar Tennysonian style, not a whit inferior to similar compositions in the volumes of his prime. In 1884 Tennyson was raised to the peerage as Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. The first part of his title was derived from a second residence which he had built for himself in Surrey, choosing a very retired situation in order that he might escape the idle curiosity of tourists. In 1886, the second great sorrow of his life befell Tennyson; his younger son, Lionel, died on the return voyage from India, where he had contracted a fever.

To Tennyson's continued mental vigour in advanced old age, his works bear testimony; his bodily strength was also little abated. "At eighty-two," his son reports, "my father preserved the high spirits of youth. He would defy his friends to get up twenty times quickly from a low chair without touching it with their hands while he was performing this feat himself, and one afternoon he had a long waltz with M—— in the ball room." This vigour was maintained almost to the very close of his long life. It was the sixth of October, 1892, when the great poet breathed his last. "Nothing could have been more striking than the scene during the last few hours," writes his medical attendant. "On the bed a figure of breathing marble, flooded and bathed in the light of the full moon streaming through the oriel window; his hand clasping the Shakespeare which he had asked for but recently, and which he had kept by him to the end; the moonlight, the majestic figure as he lay there, 'drawing thicker breath,' irresistibly brought to our minds his own 'Passing of Arthur.'" "Some friends and servants came to see him. He looked very grand and peaceful with the deep furrows of thought almost smoothed away, and the old clergyman of Lurgashall stood by the bed with his hands raised, and said, 'Lord Tennyson, God has taken you, who made you a prince of men. Farewell!'"

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

First published in 1832, but, as the notes show, the poem has been greatly improved by later revision. It is the first work which Tennyson based upon Arthurian legends; in this case contained, according to Palgrave, in an Italian novel (see note on l. 9). *Lancelot and Elaine* is a very different treatment of the same story where the interest is more human and the motives and characters perfectly comprehensible. Here we have a beautiful series of pictures presenting part of the history of a mysterious being, involved in a strange fate. This mystery of the poem suggests symbolism, to which the poet was inclined, as, for example, in *The Palace of Art* and the *Idylls of the King*; so Mr. Hutton seems to think that the history of the poet's own genius is shadowed forth, which "was sick of the magic of fancy and its picture-shadows, and was turning away from them to the poetry of human life." While Mr. Alfred Ainger (as quoted by Mr. Sykes) says: "The key to this wonderful tale of magic, and yet of deep human significance, is to be found, perhaps, in the lines:

> Or when the moon was overhead
> Came two young lovers lately wed;
> 'I am half sick of shadows' said
> The Lady of Shalott.

The dew-born love of something, for some one, in the wide world from which she has been so long excluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities. The curse is the anguish of unrequited love. The shock of her disappointment kills her." Mr. Ainger's interpretation was derived from the poet himself; but it was doubtless the picturesque aspects of the subject, rather than any deep human significance that attracted and occupied the poet.

3. **wold.** 'Open country.' The landscape the poet was most familiar with at this time was the landscape of Lincolnshire. According to the *Century Dictionary* "The wolds of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire are high rolling districts, bare of trees and exactly similar to the downs of the southern part of England."

meet the sky. Note how suggestive is the phrase of the wide uninterrupted prospect.

5. **many-tower'd Camelot.** Camelot is the capital of Arthur's domain, identified with Winchester by Malory (Bk. II, chap. xix); but in Tennyson's treatment of the Arthurian legends, the scenes and geography are wholly imaginary, and the poet seems purposely to

shun any touch which might serve to connect his scenes with actual localities. In *Gareth and Lynette* we have a description of Camelot:

> Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
> And stately, rich in emblem and the work
> Of ancient kings who hid their days in stone;
> Which Merlin's hand, the mage at Arthur's court,
> Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere
> At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak.
> And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.

9. Shalott. In the *Idylls of the King*, 'Astolat,' the form used by Malory, is employed.

10. Willows whiten through the breeze exposing the lower and lighter side of the willow leaves.

11. dusk and shiver. The darkening is due to the breaking up of the smooth surface of the water so that it no longer reflects the light.

56. pad. 'An easy paced horse' (etymologically connected with *path*).

64. still. 'Always,' 'ever.'

76. greaves. 'Armor to protect the shins.

82. free. The bridle was held with a slack hand.

84. Galaxy. The Milky Way (from Gk. *γάλα γάλακτος*, milk).

87. blazon'd. 'Ornamented with heraldic devices.'

baldric. 'A belt worn over one shoulder and crossing the breast.'

91. All. Cf. Coleridge, *Ancient Mariner*:

> All in a hot and copper sky,
> The bloody sun at noon,
> Right up above the mast did stand, etc.

98. bearded meteor. The beard is, of course, what could be more prosaically described as the 'tail.'

101. hooves. Archaic plural.

105. The mirror reflects both Lancelot on the bank, and his image in the water.

119. Note how throughout the poem, the season of the year and the weather are made to harmonize with the events of the story; the same device is adopted in the *Idylls of the King*.

ST. AGNES' EVE.

Published originally in *The Keepsake* for 1837, under the title of *St. Agnes*; included in the *Poems* of 1842; the title changed to *St. Agnes' Eve* in the edition of 1855.

January 21st is sacred to St. Agnes, who, it is narrated, refused to marry the heathen son of the pretor, and after terrible persecution suffered martyrdom in the reign of the emperor Diocletian (284-305, A.D.). With St. Agnes' Eve various superstitions were connected, more especially that upon observing the proper rites, a maiden might see her future husband (cf. Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes*). It is possible that Tennyson felt that the character and circumstances delineated in the poem did not exactly suit St. Agnes, and, accordingly changed the title of the poem, leaving the heroine a nameless embodiment of that ascetic enthusiasm which finds its masculine representative in Sir Galahad; she is "the pure and beautiful enthusiast who has died away from all her human emotions, and become the bride for whom a Heavenly Bridegroom is waiting....Wordsworth at his best, as in 'Lucy,' might scarcely match the music of these stanzas; their pictorial perfection he could hardly attain unto; every image is in such delicate harmony with the pure young worshipper that it seems to have been transfigured by her purity, and in the last four lines the very sentences faint with the breathless culmination of her rapture" (Luce).

19. **mine earthly house.** Cf. *II Corinthians* v., 1: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

21. **Break up.** 'Break open,' as in *I Henry VI.*, 1, 3, and *Matthew* xxiv., 43: "If the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he....would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

25-36. She too has her marvellous vision, like other maidens on St. Agnes' Eve, but a vision of an import and character very different from theirs.

35. **the shining sea.** Cf. *Revelation* xv., 2: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast....stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

"COME NOT WHEN I AM DEAD."

First published in *The Keepsake*, 1851.

5. **plover.** The name applied to several species of birds common in England, *e.g.*, the lapwing.

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK."

This poem appeared for the first time in the collection of 1842, and is one of the most beautiful of Tennyson's lyrics.

It will be noted that while there are only three syllables in the first line the normal line of the poem contains three feet, and the predominant foot is trisyllabic; so that each of these syllables correspond to a foot, and this line might have consisted of nine syllables. Hence the effective slow music of the opening; the time which would have been occupied by the lacking syllables of the verse being filled up by the slow enunciation of the long vowel sound in 'break,' and by the pauses between the words.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

First published in the *Enoch Arden* volume of 1864. Cauteretz is a beautiful valley of the French Pyrenees. In the summer of 1830, Tennyson and his friend Hallam went to Spain carrying money from English sympathizers to the Spanish insurgents who were under the leadership of Torrijos. Among other places, they visited this valley, and the scenery inspired Tennyson to write the opening passage of *Œnone*. Tennyson did not see the place again for thirty-one years. "On August 6th [1861], my father's birthday, we arrived at Cauteretz, his favourite valley in the Pyrenees. Before our windows we had the torrent rushing over its rocky bed from far away among the mountains and falling in cataracts. Patches of snow lay upon the peaks above, and nearer were great wooded heights glorious with autumn colours, bare rocks here and there, and greenest mountain meadows below. He wrote his lyric 'All along the Valley' after hearing the voice of the torrent seemingly sound deeper as the 'night grew' (in memory of his visit here with Arthur Hallam)." "My father was vexed that he had written 'two and thirty years ago' in his 'All along the Valley' instead of 'one and thirty years ago,' and as late as 1892 wished to alter it since he hated inaccuracy. I persuaded him to let his first reading stand, for the public had learned to love his poem in its present form, and besides 'two and thirty' was more melodious." (*Life* I., p. 475).

ELAINE.

Tennyson, early in his literary career, formed the design of writing "a whole great poem" on the subject of Arthur and his knights. In 1842, *Morte d'Arthur*, which in its Prologue is represented as the fragment of such a poem, was published. In 1857, a volume entitled *Enid and Nimuë; or, the True and the False* was printed, but was immediately withdrawn; it contained the earliest form of the two idylls subsequently published as *Enid*, and *Vivien*. In 1859 appeared a volume entitled *Idylls of the King*, containing four poems: *Enid, Vivien, Elaine, Guinevere*. In 1862 a Dedication was prefixed to these. In 1869 four new Idylls were published including *The Passing of Arthur*, an extended form of *Morte d'Arthur*; and for the first time all the idylls were brought into connection so as to form parts of the story of Arthur's reign. Other idylls were inserted subsequently, and the whole series arranged in proper order.

In this irregular fashion the poet constructed something which he wished to be regarded as a whole—a single work. The much debated question of how far the poet is justified in his view, we can, with only *one* idyll before us, scarcely discuss with profit; but perhaps it is safe to say that whatever unity there is, is not of a very high order; it doubtless adds interest to the individual poems, but does not constitute them an effective artistic whole. Apart from the external unity of story or plot which he strove to give, the poet added another unifying principle—an underlying purpose and meaning. He says in the closing address to the Queen:

> accept this old imperfect tale
> New-old, and *shadowing Sense at war with Soul*
> Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,
> Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain-peak,
> And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still.

The poem before us is the *Elaine* of 1859; the alterations, which have since been made, are unimportant. It was written, therefore, before the poet had given any indications that these idylls were intended to form parts of a greater whole. We can safely, then, presume that this poem is capable of being sufficiently appreciated by itself, out of relation to the other idylls; we are only in the position in which Tennyson put the readers of the edition of 1859—a volume which, on the face of it, simply contained four studies of female character from Arthurian legend—not parts of a greater poem. Further, there was not in the volume of 1859 (as in the setting of *Morte d'Arthur*, or in the address *To the Queen*) any hint given to the readers of a symbolic meaning. It

is very questionable if such meaning were present in his mind when he wrote the four idylls of 1859, although some of the later idylls such as *Gareth and Lynette*, and *The Holy Grail* must be interpreted symbolically to be fully appreciated. In the completed *Idylls*, Arthur represents the Soul, or the spiritual element in man or in the universe, or the ideal; Guinevere, the body, or the flesh, or the purely material; Merlin, the intellect; the knights the various powers of man, etc. But such interpretation can scarcely be applied to *Elaine*, nor is the poem made a whit more beautiful or effective by the attempt, although such a statement need not be true of some of the other idylls.

Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* are based upon the old legends about Arthur and his knights as they are found narrated in prose by Sir Thomas Malory in his *Morte d'Arthur*, written about the year 1570. The character of this book and the extent of Tennyson's indebtedness to it may be judged from the passages quoted in the following notes.

2. Malory calls her "Elaine le Blank" (*i.e.* the *blanche* or white).

Astolat. The name which appears as "Shalott" in Tennyson's earlier treatment of this theme. Malory identifies this place with Guildford in Surrey, but the geography of Tennyson's *Idylls* is purely imaginary.

9. **blazon'd.** The word 'blazon' meant properly a shield; hence armorial bearings. The derived verb employed in this passage means to depict in colours as heraldic devices are depicted.

10. **tinct.** The common modern form of the word is 'tint.'

wit. Not in the narrower sense common in modern English, but in the broader original sense of 'intellect in general.' *Of her wit*, 'out of her own invention.'

16. **read.** 'Perused,' 'studied.'

22. **Caerlyle.** Carlisle in Cumberland. *Caer* is of Celtic origin and means castle.

23. **Caerleon** upon Usk is South Wales; cf. *Geraint and Enid*:

> For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before
> Held court at old Caerleon-upon-Usk.

One of Arthur's twelve great battles was fought here.

Camelot. See on *Lady of Shalott*, l. 5.

31. **jousts.** 'A tournament.' The story of the origin of the jousts and the prize of diamonds is not in Malory.

36. **Lyonnesse.** A fabulous region extending from Cornwall to the Scilly isles, supposed to have been submerged in the sea.

37. **tarn.** 'A mountain lake.'

54. **shingly.** 'Covered with loose pebbles; cf. *Enoch Arden*, 733; "Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot."

54. **scaur.** 'A bare and broken place on a hill side.'

63. There were nine diamonds, four on each side, and one in front see l. 46 above).

66. **The Heathen.** The Saxons and Norsemen against whom the British were fighting.

76. **the place,** etc. 'London.'

77. **let proclaim.** 'Caused to be proclaimed.' This use of 'let' was sufficiently common in earlier English. So in the passage of Malory on which this is based (xviii., 3): "The knight let cry a great joust and tournament that should be that day at Camelot, that is Winchester."

78, fol. Compare Malory, xviii., 8:

"So King Arthur made him ready to depart to these jousts and would have had the queen with him: but that time she would not, she said, for she was sick and might not ride at that time. That me repenteth, said the King, for this seven year ye saw not such a fellowship together, except at Whitsuntide, when Galahad departed from the court. Truly, said the queen to the King, you must hold me excused, I may not be there, and that me repenteth."

90. **Love-loyal.** For similar examples of Tennyson's use of alliterative compound words, see "tiny-trumpeting" (l. 138), "barren-beaten" (l. 161), "green-glimmering" (l. 482), "strange-statued" (l. 796).

92. **tale.** 'Number,' cf. *Exodus*, v., 8: "And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them," and Macaulay's *Horatius*: "And now hath every city sent up her tale of men."

95. **lets.** 'Hinders.' Cf. *Hamlet*, i., 4, 95: "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me"; so in the collect for the fourth Sunday in Advent: "through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us."

98, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 8:

"Sir Launcelot ye are greatly to blame, thus to hold you behind my lord; what trow ye, what will your enemies and mine say and deem? Nought else but see how Sir Launcelot holdeth him ever behind the King and so doth the Queen, for that they would be together: and thus will they say, said the queen to Launcelot, have ye no doubt thereof."

104, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii, 9:

"Madam, said Sir Launcelot, I allow your wit, 'tis of late cǝme sin [*i.e.*, since] ye were so wise, and therefore Madam, as at this time I will be ruled by your counsel, and this night I will take my rest, and to-morrow by time will take my way toward Winchester."

107. **the myriad cricket.** Cf. *Enoch Arden*, 579: "The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl."

109. **is nothing.** 'Is of no account, not worthy of regard.'

111. **worship.** Cf. *Merlin and Vivien*, 11-13:

> Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl
> But the great Queen herself, fought in her name,
> Sware by her.

and *Guinevere*:

> To love one maiden only, cleave to her.
> And worship her by years of noble deeds.

is allow'd. According to *The New English Dictionary*, there are confounded in the word 'allow' two words of different origins, one ultimately from Lat. *allaudare*, 'to praise' another from *allocare*, 'to assign, bestow.' "Between the two primary significations there naturally arose a variety of uses blending them in the general idea of *assign with approval*, grant, concede a thing claimed or urged, admit a thing offered, permit, etc., etc. As an illustration of this variation in the meaning, compare the use of *allow* in the line before us with its use in lines 153 and 202 below, and also Malory's use of the same word in the passage quoted in the note to l. 104. In the present passage the meaning 'is allowed of' is closer to *allaudare* than in the most ordinary modern use; cf. *Luke*, xi., 48: "Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers."

119. **devoir.** 'Duty'; especially 'knightly duty.'

122-3. Cf. l. 133 below and *Maud*, Pt. I., ii.:

> Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
> Dead perfection, no more.

131. In *Gareth* and *Lynette*, these are described as vows—

> Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
> And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
> And uttermost obedience to the King.

and in another place Merlin calls them—

> Such vows as is a shame
> A man should not be bound by, yet the which
> No man can keep.

In *Guinevere*, Arthur says of his knights—

> I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
> To reverence the King, as if he were
> Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
> To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,

To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To honour his own word as if his God's,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her.

135. **The low sun.** 'The sun low in the horizon' which colours the clouds, unlike "the Sun in heaven" (l. 124) which gives a white light.

136. **the bond** of marriage.

176, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 9:

"This old baron had a daughter that time that was called the fair maid of Astolat. And ever she beheld Sir Launcelot wonderfully. And, as the book saith, she cast such love unto Sir Launcelot that she, could never withdraw her love, wherefore she died; and her name was Elaine le Blank. So thus as she came to and fro, she was so hot in her love that she besought Sir Launcelot to wear upon him at the justs a token of hers. Fair damsel, said Sir Launcelot, and if I grant you that, ye may say I do more for your love than ever I did for lady or damsel. Then he remembered him that he would go to the justs disguised, and for because he had never afore that time borne no manner of token of no damsel, then he bethought him that he would bear one of her, that none of his blood thereby might know him. And then he said, Fair maiden, I will grant you to wear a token of yours upon my helmet, and therefore what it is shew it me. Sir, she said, it is a red sleeve of mine, of scarlet well embroidered with great pearls. So she brought it him. So Sir Launcelot received it and said, Never did I erst so much for no damsel. And then Sir Launcelot betook the fair maiden his shield in keeping, and prayed her to keep that until that he came again. And so that night he had merry rest and great cheer. For ever the damsel Elaine was about Sir Launcelot, all the while she might be suffered."

182. **Livest between the lips.** Cf. *Aeneid*, xii., 235: vivusque per ora feretur.

188, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 9:

"Fair Sir, said Sir Launcelot to his host, I would pray you to lend me a shield that were not openly known, for mine is well known. Sir, said his host, ye shall have your desire, for me seemeth ye be one of the likeliest knights in the world, and therefore I shall shew you friendship. Sir, wit you well I have two sons which were but late made knights, and the eldest hight Sir Tirre, and he was hurt that same day that he was made knight, that he may not ride, and his shield ye shall have, for that is not known, I dare say, but here and in no place else. And my youngest son hight Sir Lavaine, and if it please you he shall ride with you unto that justs, and he is of his age strong and wight."

197. **his shield is blank enough.** See *Gareth and Lynette*, 405-409, where it is said of the shields carved about the walls of Arthur's hall—

When some good knight had done one noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none
The shield was blank and bare without a sign
Saving the name beneath.

202. **Allow him.** See note on l. 111.

219. **an if.** A phrase in common use in Middle English for 'if,' originally 'and if,' sometimes merely 'an.' Cf. *I. Henry VI.*, v., 4, 125: "It dies and if it had a thousand lives."

234. **slightly—slight.** Such repetitions of forms of the same word, or of the same word in different applications are frequent in Tennyson; so *kindly—kind* (l. 265), *hard-won—hardly won* (l. 1159), *worship—worshipfully* (l. 1317-9), also l. 164, 262.

244. **read.** See note on l. 16 above.

271, fol. The "wordless man" and his story seem to be the invention of the poet himself. In Malory we find a single hint in the description of the arrival of the barge with the dead body (chap. xx.): "They found the fairest corpse lying in a rich bed, and a poor man sitting in the barget's end, and no word would he speak."

280. "The battle of *Mons Badonicus* is the only one of Arthur's battles mentioned by Gildas in his Latin *History of Britain*, and it is the only one which is recognized as definitely historical by modern historians."

287. In this list of battles Tennyson follows the Latin *Historia Brittonum*, by Nennius, who wrote in the 8th or 9th century. The places mentioned are variously identified with modern sites.

294. **cuirass.** 'The armour that protected breast and back.'

296. **lighten'd as he breathed.** The light played upon it through the movements of his chest.

298. The emblem of the Saxons was a White Horse, Cf. *Guinevere*, 15: "the Lords of the White Horse, Heathen, the brood by Hengist left."

305. 'Christ and Arthur' was their battle-cry; cf. *Henry V.*, iii., 1, 34; "Cry God for Harry, England, and Saint George."

339. **rathe.** 'Early.' Hence comes the comparative rather. Cf. Milton, *Lycidas*, 142: "Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies." *In Memoriam*, cx.: "The men of ripe and rather years."

348. **flattering.** 'Caressing.' According to the etymologists 'stroke' 'pat' is the original signification of the word.

357. It was usual that the knight at tournaments should wear some gift of his lady-love as a token of her favour,—a glove, scarf, etc.

359, fol. Cf. the passage from Malory quoted in note on l. 176.

383. **squire.** It was the business of the squire to carry his master's shield; the word means etymologically shield-bearer (from Lat. *scutum*, a shield).

397. **lived in fantasy.** These words repeated from l. 27 carry us back to the point at which the story broke off to tell how Elaine came to have the shield.

399. **the long backs,** etc. Very suggestive of the long undulations of the downs.

404. **white rock.** The chalky formation of which the downs consist.

423. The Dragon was the symbol of royalty among the Britons (see ll. 434 fol., below), said to have been adopted by Uther, the father of Arthur, in consequence of having seen a fiery dragon in the heavens. Pendragon (literally, dragon's head) was a title given to Uther and his son.

424. There was a mystery connected with the birth of Arthur (see *Coming of Arthur*, 177, fol.), and also with his "passing"; there was a current idea that he should "come again." The mystery which exists in the old stories, Tennyson adapts to the symbolic meaning which he gives to the subject, Arthur representing the soul, the spiritual, the ideal.

432. **samite.** Is a silk stuff interwoven with threads of gold and silver.

439-440. In the pattern, the forms of dragons gradually changed into other ornamental designs; such transitions may be observed in any piece of arabesque.

447. **crescent.** 'Growing,' *i.e.*, in knightly skill and fame; cf. l. 1400 below: "May not your crescent fear for name and fame."

465. Malory (xviii., 11) gives the following account:

"So these nine knights of Sir Launcelot's kin thrust in mightily, for they were all noble knights. And they, of great hate and despite that they had unto him, thought to rebuke that noble knight Sir Launcelot, and Sir Lavaine, for they knew them not. And so they came hurtling together, and smote down many knights of Northgalis and of Northumberland. And when Sir Launcelot saw them fare so, he gat a spear in his hand, and there encountered with him all at once Sir Bors, Sir Ector, and Sir Lionel, and all they three smote him at once with their spears. And with force of themselves they smote Sir Launcelot's horse to the earth. And by misfortune Sir Bors smote Sir Launcelot through the shield into the side, and the spear brake, and the head left still in his side. When Sir Lavaine saw his master lie on the ground, he ran to the king of Scots, and smote him to the earth, and by great force he took his horse and brought him to Sir Launcelot, and maugre them all he made him to mount upon that horse. And then Sir Launcelot gat a spear in his hand, and there he smote Sir Bors horse and man to the earth. And then he smote Sir Bleoberis, etc. . . . And by this Sir Bors was horsed, and then he came with Sir Ector and Sir Lionel, and all they three smote with swords upon Sir Launcelot's helmet. And when he felt their buffets, and his wound, the which was so grievous, then he thought to do what he might while he

might endure; and then he gave Sir Bors such a buffet that he made him bow his head passing low, and therewithal he rased off his helm, and might have slain him and so pulled him down. And in the same wise he served Sir Ector and Sir Lionel. For, as the book saith, he might have slain them, but when he saw their visages his heart might not serve him thereto, but left them there."

481. In the *Iliad*, xv., 381, and also 624 there are similar comparisons of the onset of battle with that of a wave. The "green-glimmering" is a characteristic touch of Tennyson's own close observation. "There was a period of my life," says the poet in his letter to Mr. Dawson, quoted in *A Study of the Princess*, "when, as an artist, Turner, for example, takes rough sketches of landscapes, etc., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in Nature. I never put these down, and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, *e.g.*, in the 'Idylls of the King':

With all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,

Suggestion: A storm which came upon us in the middle of the North Sea."

503-4. **Diamond me No diamonds.** A common form of expression in literature, cf. *Richard II.*, ii., 3, 87: "Grace me no grace nor uncle me no uncle."

503, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 12:

"Fair lords, I pray you that ye will suffer me to depart where me liketh, for I am sore hurt. I take none force of none honour, for I had lever to repose me than to be lord of all the world. And therewithal he groaned piteously, and road a great gallop away-ward from them, until he came under a wood's side; and when he saw that he was from the field nigh a mile, and he was sure that he might not be seen, then he said with a high voice, O gentle knight Sir Lavaine, help me that this truncheon were out of my side, for it sticketh so sore that it nigh slayeth me. O mine own lord, said Sir Lavaine, I would fain do that might please you, but I dread me sore, and I draw out the truncheon, that ye shall be in peril of death. I charge you, said Sir Launcelot, as ye love me draw it out. And therewithal he descended from his horse, and right so did Sir Lavaine, and forthwith Sir Lavaine drew the truncheon out of his side. And he gave a great shriek, and a marvellous grisly groan, and his blood brast out nigh a pint at once, that at last he sank down, and so swooned pale and deadly."

535-6. **Gawain, rise, my nephew.** The poet changed this afterwards, when the allegory began to be of more importance in the Idylls, to "Wherefore, rise, O Gawain."

548-9. The diamond seems to have been fixed in one of the flowers which formed the design of the canopy (see ll. 443-4) where it formed a *flashing* or *glistening*, hence "restless" centre.

561. **concourse.** Note the unusual but earlier accentuation; cf. 'discoúrse,' 'recoúrse.' Milton accentuates 'concoúrse.'

593. **fine.** 'Fine-spun,' 'over-subtle.'

654. **hern.** A form of *heron*; this shorter form is the one always employed by Tennyson, so in *The Brook*: "I come from haunts of coot and hern."

661. **an.** See note on l. 219.

660, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 14:

"Ah, mercy, said Sir Gawaine, now is my heart more heavier than ever it was tofore. Why? said Elaine. For I have great cause, said Sir Gawaine; is that knight that owneth this shield your love? Yea, truly, said she, my love he is, God would I were his love. Truly, said Sir Gawaine, fair damsel, ye have right, for, and he be your love, ye love the most honourable knight of the world, and the man of most worship. So me thought ever, said the damsel, for never, or that time, for no knight that ever I saw loved I never none erst. God grant, said Sir Gawaine, that either of you may rejoice other, but that is in a great adventure. But truly, said Sir Gawaine unto the damsel, ye may say ye have a fair grace, for why, I have known that noble knight this four and twenty year, and never or that day I nor none other knight, I dare make it good, saw nor heard say that ever he bare token or sign of no lady, gentlewoman, nor maiden, at no justs nor tournament. And therefore, fair maiden, said Sir Gawaine, ye are much beholden to him to give him thanks. But I dread me, said Sir Gawaine, that ye shall never see him in this world, and that is great pity that ever was of earthly knight. Alas, said she, how may this be? Is he slain? I say not so, said Sir Gawaine, but wit ye well, he is grievously wounded, by all manner of signs, and by men's sight, more likely to be dead then to be on live; and wit ye well he is the noble knight Sir Launcelot, for by this shield I know him. Alas, said the fair maiden of Astolat, how may this be, and what was his hurt? Truly, said Sir Gawaine, the man in the world that loved him best hurt him so, and I dare say, said Sir Gawaine, and that knight that hurt him knew the very certainty that he had hurt Sir Launcelot, it would be the most sorrow that ever came to his heart. Now, fair father, said then Elaine, I require you give me leave to ride and to seek him, or else I wot well I shall go out of my mind, for I shall never stint till that I find him and my brother Sir Lavaine. Do as it liketh you, said her father, for me right sore repenteth of the hurt of that noble knight. Right so the maid made her ready, and before Sir Gawaine making great dole. Then on the morn Sir Gawaine came to king Arthur, and told him how he had found Sir Launcelot's shield in the keeping of the fair maiden of Astolat. All that knew I aforehand, said king Arthur, and that caused me I would not suffer you to have ado at the great justs: for I espied, said king Arthur, when he came in till his lodging, full late in the evening in Astolat. But marvel have I, said Arthur, that ever he would bear any sign of any damsel: for, or [before] now, I never heard say nor knew that ever he bare any token of none earthly woman. By my head, said Sir Gawaine, the fair maiden of Astolat loveth him marvellously well; what it meaneth I cannot say; and she is ridden after to seek him. So the king and all came to London, and there Sir Gawaine openly disclosed to all the court that it was Sir Launcelot that justed best."

661. **Ramp in the field.** *Ramp* is the technical term in heraldry to describe an animal on its hind feet in the posture of attack; *field* is

the heraldic term for the general surface of the shield, the background of the emblazonry.

787. fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 15:

"By fortune Sir Lavaine was ridden to play him, to enchafe his horse. And anon as Elaine saw him she knew him, and then she cried onloud until him. And when he heard her, anon he came to her; and then she asked her brother; How did my lord Sir Launcelot? Who told you sister that my lord's name was Launcelot? Then she told him how Sir Gawaine by his shield knew him. So they rode together till they came to the hermitage, and anon she alight. So Sir Lavaine brought her to Sir Launcelot. And when she saw him lie so sick and pale in his bed, she might not speak, but suddenly she fell to the earth down suddenly in a swoon, and there she lay a great while. And when she was relieved she sighed, and said, My lord Sir Launcelot, alas, why be ye in this plight? and then she swooned again. And then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Lavaine to take her up,—And bring her to me. And when she came to herself, Sir Launcelot kissed her, and said, Fair maiden, why fare ye thus? Ye put me to pain; wherefore make ye no more such cheer, for, and ye be come to comfort me, ye be right welcome, and of this little hurt that I have, I shall be right hastily whole, by the grace of God. But I marvel, said Sir Launcelot, who told you my name."

795. **in his moods.** 'In one of the moody fits to which he was subject.' Cf. *Maud I.*, xiv.: "What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?"

797. **mystically.** 'In such a way as to symbolize a deeper meaning.'

808. **battle-writhen.** This characteristically Tennysonian phrase seems to mean 'with the knotted sinews developed through their constant use in battle.'

840. **wildly-sculptured.** This seems to be a misprint; in later editions we read "weirdly-sculptured."

852. **forebore him.** 'Was patient with him'; cf. *Ephesians*, iv., 2; "with long suffering, forbearing one another in love."

858. **simples.** 'Medicinal plants'; a common meaning of the word, see *Romeo and Juliet*, v. 1, 40.

871-3. He was pledged by his honour to his dishonourable love for Guinevere.

881. **that ghostly grace.** The visionary beauty referred to in l. 78.

899. **burthen.** 'The refrain of a song'; So in the stage direction to the song in *As You Like It*, iv., 2: "The rest shall bear this burden," and in *Enoch Arden*, 792:

> Beating it in upon his weary brain
> As tho' it were the burthen of a song.

906. This refers to the practice of putting garlands of flowers upon victims to be sacrificed at the altar.

915. There was a popular notion that a ghost could not speak unless first spoken to; cf. *Hamlet*, I., 1, 45.

939. blare. 'Blow abroad,' properly of trumpets, cf. *Welcome to Alexandria*: "Warble, O bugle, and trumpet blare."

954. Lancelot's ancestral domain was in France—"Benwick, some men call it Bayonne, and some men call it Beaume" (see Malory, xx., 18).

994, fol. Mr. Churton Collins says (p. 147): "This passage is an admirable illustration of Tennyson's power of transfusing the very essence of Virgil into English," and cites *Aeneid*, iv., 460-3:

> Hinc exaudiri voces et verba vocantis
> Visa viri, nox cum terras obscura teneret;
> Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
> Saepe queri et longas in fletum ducere voces.

1000. **make** in earlier English is the technical phrase for the composition of poetry; and poets were called *makers*; this, indeed, is the meaning of the Greek word ποιητής from which the word 'poet' is derived.

1001. Songs of similar form are found repeatedly in the "Idylls of the King" (see *Marriage of Geraint*, 347, *Coming of Arthur*, 481, *Merlin and Vivien* 385, *Guinevere*, 166, *Gareth and Lynette*, 974, 1034, etc.). The three line stanzas may have been suggested by the Welsh Triads. The most ancient of the Cimbrian Bards wrote in stanzas of three rhyming lines. . . . each line containing seven syllables. A more exact imitation of these Triads is to be found at line 402 of *The Coming of Arthur*, where Merlin speaks "In riddling triplets of old time," each stanza consisting of three lines rhyming together.

1016. Phantoms that give notice of death in particular families are common in tradition.

1020. **shrilling.** Tennyson is fond of using *shrill* as a verb, cf. *Passing of Arthur*, 34, 42, *Talking Oak*, 68, *Enoch Arden*, 178.

1049. **muse at me.** Cf. *Macbeth*, iii., 4, 85: "Do not muse at me, my most worthy friend," *King John*, iii., 1, 317, "I muse your majesty doth seem so cold."

1062. **an.** See note on l. 219.

1085. **pass.** 'Die'; cf. the expression 'the passing bell,' and *In Memoriam*, lvii.:

> The passing of the sweetest soul
> That ever look'd with human eyes.

1099, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 19:

"Now speak we of the fair maiden of Astolat, that made such sorrow day and night, that she never slept, eat, nor drank; and ever she made her complaint unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten days, that she feebled so that she must needs pass out of this world, then she shrived her clean, and received her Creator. And ever she complained still upon Sir Launcelot. Then her ghostly father bade her leave such thoughts. Then she said, Why should I leave such thoughts? am I not an earthly woman? and all the while the breath is in my body I may complain me, for my belief is I do none offence though I love an earthly man, and I take God to my record I never loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a pure maiden I am for him and for all other. And since it is the sufferance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight, I beseech the High Father of heaven to have mercy upon my soul, and upon mine innumerable pains that I suffered may be allegiance of part of my sins. For sweet Lord Jesu, said the fair maiden I take thee to record, on thee I was never great offender against thy laws, but that I loved this noble knight Sir Launcelot out of measure, and of myself, good Lord, I might not withstand the fervent love wherefore I have my death. And then she called her father Sir Bernard, and her brother Sir Tirre, and heartily she prayed her father that her brother might write a letter like as she did indite it; and so her father granted her. And when the letter was written word by word like as she devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead,—And while my body is hot, let this letter be put in my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter until that I be cold, and let me be put in a fair bed, with all the richest clothes that I have about me, and so let my bed, and all my richest clothes, be laid with me in a chariot unto the next place where Thames is, and there let me be put within a barget, and but one man with me, such as ye trust to steer me thither, and that my barget be covered with black samite, over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you, let it be done. So her father granted it her faithfully, all things should be done like as she had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole, for, when this was done, anon she died. And so when she was dead, the corpse, and the bed, all was led the next way unto Thames, and there a man, and the corpse, and all, were put into Thames, and so the man steered the barget unto Westminster, and there he rowed a great while to and fro or any espied it."

1095. **ghostly man.** 'A *spiritual* man,' 'a priest'; cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, iii., 3, 49: "Being a divine, a ghostly confessor," and the communion service in the *Book of Common Prayer*; "He may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice."

1132. **with bent brows.** 'The brows contracted in grief,' cf. *Aylmer's Field*, 625: "Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averil." Mr. Rowe interprets this "with bowed heads," and Mr. Webb similarly interprets the passage in *Aylmer's Field*.

1135. Note the season; the various Idylls are assigned to appropriate seasons of the year.

1171. **oriel.** 'A projecting window.'

1179. **Is tawnier than her cygnet's.** A cygnet is a young swan which is of a dark, bluish-gray colour.

1251-2. The idea of a second coming is connected with several popular heroes, Charlemagne, Barbarossa, etc.; and Malory says, xxi., 7: "Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but lived by the will of our Lord Jesu in another place. And men say that he will come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse:

'Hic jacet Arthurus Rex quondam rexque futurus.'"

1257-8. For Sir Percivale and Sir Galahad see *The Holy Grail*. Both were distinguished among the Knights of the Round Table for their purity.

1272, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 20:

"And this was the intent of the letter:—Most noble knight, Sir Launcelot, now hath death made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the fair maiden of Astolat; therefore unto all ladies I make my moan; yet pray for my soul, and bury me at the least, and offer ye my mass-penny. This is my last request. And a clean maiden I died, I take God to witness. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art peerless.—This was all the substance in the letter. And when it was read the king, the queen, and all the knights wept for pity of the doleful complaints. Then was Sir Launcelot sent for. And when he was come, king Arthur made the letter to be read to him; and when Sir Launcelot heard it word by word, he said, My lord Arthur, wit ye well I am right heavy of the death of this fair damsel. God knoweth I was never causer of her death by my willing, and that will I report me to her own brother; here he is, Sir Lavaine. I will not say nay, said "Sir Launcelot, but that she was both fair and good, and much I was beholden unto her, but she loved me out of measure. Ye might have shewed her, said the queen, some bounty and gentleness, that might have preserved her life. Madam, said Sir Launcelot, she would none other way be answered, but that she would be my wife, or else my love, and of these two I would not grant her; but I proffered her, for her good love that she showed me, a thousand pound yearly to her and to her heirs, and to wed any manner knight that she could find best to love in her heart. For madam, said Sir Launcelot, I love not to be constrained to love; for love must arise of the heart, and not by no constraint. That is truth, said the king, and many knights: love is free in himself, and never will be bounden; for where he is bounden he loseth himself. Then said the king unto Sir Launcelot, It will be your worship that ye oversee that she be interred worshipfully. Sir, said Sir Launcelot, that shall be done as I can best devise. And so many knights went thither to behold that fair maiden. And so upon the morn she was interred richly, and Sir Launcelot offered her mass-penny, and all the knights of the Table Round that were there at that time offered with Sir Launcelot. And then the poor man went again with the barget. Then the Queen sent for Sir Launcelot, and prayed him for mercy, for why she had been wroth with him causeless. This is not the first time, said Sir Launcelot, that ye have been displeased with me causeless; but, madam, ever I must suffer you, but what sorrow I endure I take no force."

1317. **worship.** 'Honour'—the word is Malory's.

1320. **that shrine.** According to Malory (see passage quoted in the note on l. 1099), this was Westminster Abbey, or rather the church that stood on the site, built by Sebert, King of the West Saxons in the seventh century.

1334. **blazon'd.** See note on l. 9.

1348. **affiance.** 'Trust,' 'confidence,' so in Shakespeare, *Henry V.*, ii., 2, 127, and in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the petition for the Queen, "that she may evermore have affiance in thee."

1391. **crescent.** See note on l. 448 ; the 'crescent moon' is also in the speaker's mind.

1410. **a man Not after Arthur's heart.** Cf. *I. Samuel*, viii., 14: "the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart."

1411. **without.** The use of "without" as a conjunction is usually regarded as a vulgarism. Such use is, however, occasionally found in good writers, especially of an earlier date : see, for example, *Much Ado About Nothing*, iii., 3, 86.

NOTES ON BROWNING.

The Browning family seems to have been a sound, vigorous and genuinely English stock, which, at length, after various remote strains had been grafted upon it, produced the flower of genius in the person of Robert Browning, the poet. His grandfather, who migrated from Dorsetshire to London, was a successful official in the Bank of England, and married a certain Margaret Tittle, a native of St. Kitts in the West Indies. Their son, the poet's father, disappointed in his desire of becoming an artist, also entered the service of the bank in which he continued until advancing years brought superannuation. As a bank clerk he earned a steady income which, if not large, sufficed his needs. In 1811, he married Sarah Ann Weidemann, of Scottish German origin, her father, a native of Hamburg, having settled and married in Dundee; he was a ship-owner in a small way. Browning's parents spent their joint lives in the southern suburbs of London; and there, in Camberwell, their eldest son Robert was born, May 7th, 1812. Only one other child, a daughter, survived infancy; she never married and long after, in her brother's latest years, presided over his household. Browning was specially fortunate in his family relations; in the absence of a public school and university education this quiet, simple, nonconformist family circle counted for more in his case than is perhaps usual with English men of letters. It was not, however, an ordinary middle-class home; the father was a man of exceptional culture with pronounced artistic and literary tastes, something of a scholar and an enthusiastic collector of books and prints. We hear of the charm he exercised over those he met, through his simple, cheerful, unworldly spirit, and his kindly heart. "The father and uncle," writes Dante Rossetti to William Ailingham, "—father especially—show just that submissive yet highly cheerful and capable simplicity of character which often, I think, appears in the family of a great man who uses at last what others have kept for him. The father is a complete oddity—with real genius for drawing . . . . . and as innocent as a child." To his son he transmitted a vigorous constitution and an energetic and optimistic temperament. The mother was characterized by Carlyle as "the true type of a Scottish gentlewoman;" she was a pious woman with a delicate and nervous organization and was a loving and judicious mother to her distinguished

son. The boy "was a handsome, vigorous, fearless child, and soon developed an unresting activity and a fiery temper. He clamoured for occupation from the moment he could speak." His education was of a somewhat unusual and desultory character; school counted for little, and he did not take a university course. But the house overflowed with books from which he did not fail to profit. "By the indulgence of my father and mother," he wrote in a letter of 1887, "I was allowed to live my own life and choose my own course in it; which, having been the same from the beginning to the end, necessitated a permission to read nearly all sorts of books in a well-stocked and very miscellaneous library. I had no other direction than my parents' taste for whatever was highest and best in literature; but I found out for myself many forgotten fields which proved the richest of pastures." As he grew older he had tutors in various branches, and thus was instructed not only in academic subjects but also in music, singing, dancing, riding and fencing. He had a passion for music and early showed artistic aptitudes. By the time he was twelve years old he had written a volume of poems which seemed to his father to possess real excellence, but which the writer himself, in later life, described as mere echoes of Byron. In 1825 he accidentally became acquainted with the poems of Shelley and Keats, and was profoundly affected by the work of the former. Shelley's influence is the most important single literary factor in his life, and traces of it are clearly perceptible in his first published poem *Pauline;* but Browning's genius was markedly individual and independent, and less in his case than is usual, can one perceive indebtedness either to predecessors or contemporaries.

Browning early determined to be a poet; when the time came to make choice of a profession, "he appealed to his father whether it would not be better for him to see life in the best sense and cultivate the powers of his mind than shackle himself in the very outset of his career by a laborious training foreign to his aim." The father acquiesced and cheerfully furnished from his modest income the means which freed his son from the necessity of pursuing any lucrative calling. "He secured for me," says the latter, "all the ease and comfort that a literary man needs to do good work." By the kindness of an aunt, his mother's sister, a poem of his, *Pauline*, was printed in 1833. This youthful production, apart from impressing favourably two or three discerning critics, wholly failed to attract public attention. In 1833-4 he spent some three months in St. Petersburg.

In 1835 he published *Paracelsus*, a work which holds its own, even when brought into comparison with his maturer productions; although it wholly failed in winning popular favour, *Paracelsus* revealed to the few the advent of a poet of extraordinary promise, and opened for him the doors of literary society in London. He made the acquaintance of many distinguished men, and came into close and friendly relations, especially, with the critic, John Foster, and with the great actor, Macready. Partly through the influence of the latter, he began the writing of plays, and to this species of literature he devoted a considerable part of his poetic activity during the next ten years. Two of these, *Strafford* and *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon*, were produced on the stage with partial success; but the treatment the latter play received at the hands of the manager made the author resolve to write no more for the theatre. In 1838 he made his first visit to Italy, a country with which much of his work and much of his life were to be closely connected. He was already engaged upon a poem based on mediæval Italian history, *Sordello*. It is the most difficult of all his works, and made Browning's name a by-word for obscurity; the impression thus created was doubtless one of the factors in his failure, during the next twenty years, to make any progress in popular regard. As his writings brought no money return, he had recourse to a cheap method of publication; he issued them from time to time, as they accumulated on his hands, in paper-covered pamphlets, each consisting of sixteen double-columned pages. From 1841 to 1846, eight of these pamphlets appeared; in them was to be found some of his best and most characteristic work, notably *Pippa Passes* (1844) and the two collections of shorter poems entitled *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845). The series had the common title, *Bells and Pomegranates*, "to indicate," as the poet explained, "an endeavour towards something like an alternation or mixture of music with discourse, sound with sense, poetry with thought."

A second voyage to Italy was made in 1844. On his return opened the one romantic incident of his uneventful history. Miss Elizabeth Barrett, who already enjoyed a wide reputation as a poet, had recently published a volume which contained a complimentary allusion to Browning's poetry. Browning read the volume with enthusiastic admiration, and, at the instigation of a common friend, John Kenyon, expressed this admiration in a letter to Miss Barrett. The result was an animated correspondence and a growing feeling of warm friendship. Miss Barrett was a chronic invalid, confined to her room, scarcely

seeing anyone but the members of her own family; hence for some months the poets did not actually meet. At length, on May 20th, 1845, Browning saw his correspondent for the first time, "a little figure which did not rise from the sofa, pale ringletted face, great eager, wistfully pathetic eyes." The friendship rapidly ripened into passionate admiration. But to the natural issue of their attachment were great obstacles. Her father was a man of strange and selfish temper, who thought that the lives of his children should be wholly dedicated to himself, and who treated his daughter—now thirty-nine years of age—as if she were a child. To him she could not dare even to hint the possibility of marriage. More insuperable obstacle still was her own ill-health; though under the stimulus of the new interest in life, this had greatly improved, she was supposed to be labouring under an incurable disease of the spine. To incur her father's anger, to burden her lover with an invalid wife seemed to her impossible. A twelvemonth passed; in the summer of 1846, her life was represented as depending upon her spending the following winter in a warmer climate. Her father negatived any such plan. There was now a new and forcible argument in Browning's favour, and Miss Barrett at length yielded. They were married in September, 1846, and embarked for the continent. The father never forgave his daughter and henceforward persistently refused all communications with her or her husband.

This marriage, which was at once one of the most extraordinary and one of the happiest in the annals of genius, completely changed the tenor of Browning's life. During the next fifteen years his home was in Italy, and for the greater part of that time, in Florence; although, in summer especially, other parts of Italy afforded a temporary residence. Mrs. Browning's health greatly improved, and, while still frail, she could travel, enjoy the open air, and mingle, to some limited degree, with the world. In the earlier years of their married life, they saw but little of society; but subsequently they became acquainted with many English and Americans resident or travelling in Italy, and formed not a few intimate friendships, for example, with Landor, Lytton, Leighton (the painter), Fanny Kemble, among the English; and with Powers (the sculptor), Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Hawthorne, and the Storys, among Americans. In 1849 a son was born to them. In the spring of 1851, Mrs. Browning's health permitted a journey northward, and the following year-and-a-half was spent in London and Paris. They now came into close personal relations with many of their distinguished contemporaries, Carlyle, Tennyson, D. G. Rossetti, and

others. The visit was repeated in 1855, when *Men and Women* was published; this volume contains probably a larger quantity of Browning's best work than any other single publication of his. In 1851 Browning had been appreciatively reviewed by a French critic, M. Milsand, in the pages of a leading French magazine. But the indifference of the English reading public continued, now and for years to come. To this Mrs. Browning refers, some ten years later, in a letter to her husband's sister: "His treatment in England affects him, naturally, and for my part I set it down as an infamy of that public—no other word." After referring to the recognition he was finding in the United States, she continues "I don't complain for myself of an unappreciating public. *I have no reason.* But just for *that* reason, I complain more about Robert—only he does not hear me complain—to *you* I may say that the blindness, deafness, and stupidity of the English public to Robert are amazing. Of course, Milsand has heard his name—well, the contrary would have been strange. Robert IS. All England can't prevent his existence, I suppose. But nobody there, except a small knot of pre-Raffaelite men, pretend to do him justice. Mr. Forster has done the best—in the press. As a sort of lion, Robert has his range in society—and—for the rest you should see Chapman's [his publisher] returns! While in America he is a power, a writer, a poet—he is read—he lives in the hearts of the people!"

One consequence of this state of things had been that the Brownings had been under the necessity of living with the strictest economy. In 1855 their finances were placed in a better condition by legacies amounting to £11,000 which came to them through the death of their old friend John Kenyon. The plan of dividing the time between London, Paris and Italy was continued until 1861. By that time Mrs. Browning's health had begun to decline; a winter spent in Rome proved unfavourable to her, and on June 29th, she suddenly expired in her husband's arms at their own home in Florence.

The blow to Browning was overwhelming. "Life must now begin anew," he wrote, "all the old cast off and the new one put on. I shall go away, break up everything, go to England, and live and work and write." As soon as possible he left Florence, never to revisit it, and, mainly from considerations in regard to his son, took up his residence in London. His manner of life again underwent a revolution. He at first lived a very isolated existence, cutting himself off wholly from general society. But, in the spring of 1863, as he told Mr. Gosse, he suddenly realized that "this mode of life was morbid and unworthy,

and, then and there, he determined to accept for the future every suitable invitation that came to him." Thus, in course of time, he came to be one of the most familiar figures in London society, and at notable public entertainments, especially of a musical character. His summers he was accustomed to spend on the coast of France. In 1864 he published *Dramatis Personæ*, a collection of poems similar in character and excellence to *Men and Women*. The tide of opinion had now begun to set decisively in his favour. In 1864 he writes to an intimate friend: "There were always a few people who had a certain opinion of my poems, but nobody cared to speak what he thought, or the things printed twenty-five years ago would not have waited so long for a good word; but at last a new set of men arrive who don't mind the conventionalities of ignoring one and seeing everything in another—Chapman [his publisher] says 'the new orders come from Oxford and Cambridge,' and all my new cultivators are young men.... As I begun, so I shall end,—taking my own course, pleasing myself or aiming at doing so, and thereby, I hope, pleasing God. As I never did otherwise, I never had any fear as to what I did going ultimately to the bad,—hence in collected editions, I always reprinted everything, smallest and greatest." His fame was fully established on the publication of the longest and one of the greatest of his poems *The Ring and the Book* in 1868-9. From this time, even the general public, although they did not read him, became aware of the fact that Tennyson was not the only great English poet living and writing. When *The Ring and the Book* was approaching completion, Browning wrote: "Booksellers are making me pretty offers for it. One sent to propose, last week, to publish it at his risk, giving me *all* the profits, and pay me the whole in advance—'for the incidental advantages of my name'—the R. B. who for six months once did not sell one copy of the poems."

In 1881 a novel honour was done him in the foundation in London of a society for the study and elucidation of his works. This example was followed far and wide both in Great Britain and in America; and the Browning cult became a temporary fashion. However feeble or foolish some of this work may have been, these Browning societies, on the whole, did much for the spreading of a genuine interest in the works of a somewhat recondite poet. Browning himself continued to be a diligent writer to the last, but none of the numerous volumes issued subsequent to 1868 reached the level which had been attained by the best of his earlier work. In his work, activity of the intellect had always tended to trespass unduly upon the sphere of the imagination,

and with the decay of imaginative power natural to old age, the purely poetic excellence of his writings began to decline, although they might still continue to possess interest as the utterances of a powerful and active mind. In 1878 Italy was revisited for the first time since his wife's death, and began to exercise its former fascination over him. He returned repeatedly and finally purchased the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice as a residence for his son, who had become an artist. Gradually old age began to tell on the vigorous frame of the poet, but, as far as health permitted, he maintained his old interests and activities to the last, and his final volume of poems appeared on the very day of his death. This occurred in Venice on Dec. 12th, 1889.

Mr. Edmond Gosse, who knew Browning in his later years, thus sums up his personal characteristics: "In physique Robert Browning was short and thick-set, of very muscular build; his temper was ardent and optimistic; he was appreciative, sympathetic and full of curiosity; prudent in affairs and rather 'close' about money; robust, active, loud of speech, cordial in manner, gracious and conciliatory in address; but subject to sudden fits of indignation which were like thunderstorms." Hawthorne speaking of an evening spent with the Brownings in Florence, 1858, says: "Mr. Browning was very efficient in keeping up conversation with everybody, and seemed to be in all parts of the room and in every group at the same moment; a most vivid and quick-thoughted person, logical and common-sensible, as, I presume, poets generally are in their daily talk." On another occasion he says: "Browning was very genial and full of life as usual, but his conversation has the effervescent aroma which you cannot catch, even if you get the very words that seem imbued with it. . . . . Browning's nonsense is of very genuine and excellent quality, the true babble and effervescence of a bright and powerful mind, and he lets it play among his friends with the faith and simplicity of a child. He must be an amiable man."

In his later years, when Browning mingled freely in society, he did not, to the casual observer, seem the poet, either in his general appearance or in his talk. He gave the impression of being a shrewd and energetic man of the world. Mr. F. G. Palgrave, whom he used frequently to visit subsequent to 1861, describes his visits as very pleasant, "but neither then nor afterwards was his conversation in any apparent near relation to his work or thought as a poet." In regard to this trait Sir Leslie Stephen writes in an essay, *The Browning Letters*, "People who met Browning occasionally accepted the common-place

doctrine that the poet and the man may be wholly different persons. Browning, that is, could talk like a brilliant man of the world, and the common-place person could infer that he did not possess the feelings which he did not care to exhibit at a dinner party. It was not difficult to discover that such a remark showed the superficiality of the observer, not the absence of the underlying qualities. These letters, at any rate, demonstrate to the dullest that the intensity of passion which makes the poet, was equally present in the man." To this passage he subjoins a note: "I happened to meet Browning at a moment of great interest to me, I knew little of him then, and had rather taken him at the valuation indicated above. He spoke a few words, showing such tenderness, insight, and sympathy, that I have never forgotten his kindness; and from that time knew him for what he was. I cannot say more; but I say so much by way of expressing my gratitude." Very weighty testimony to the charm and greatness of Browning's character is found in a private letter of Jowett, the late Master of Balliol, dated 1868. "I thought I was getting too old to make new friends. But I believe I have made one—Mr. Browning the poet, who has been staying with me during the last few days. It is impossible to speak without enthusiasm of his open, generous nature and his great ability and knowledge. I had no idea that there was a perfectly sensible poet in the world, entirely free from vanity, jealousy, or any other littleness, and thinking no more of himself than if he were an ordinary man. His great energy is very remarkable, and his determination to make the most of the remainder of his life."

"ALL SERVICE RANKS THE SAME WITH GOD."

This song is put in the mouth of Pippa, the little silk-weaver, heroine of the dramatic poem, *Pippa Passes* (1841). She comforts herself, in her insignificance, with the thought to which this little poem gives expression.

CAVALIER TUNES.

First published in No. III. of *Bells and Pomegranates*, the volume entitled *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842). The writing of his drama *Strafford*, produced in 1837, had busied the poet's mind with the scenes of the Civil War which affords the historic setting of these poems.

The appropriateness of the term *dramatic* lyric is, in the present case, specially manifest. (1) The verses with the exception of the first stanza of *Marching Along* are the utterances of an imaginary personage, and express his, not the poet's, sentiments. (2) Each poem is supposed to represent an actual speech, and is not, like *In the Valley of Cauteretz*, or *Break, break, break*, the immediate poetic expression of a feeling. Thus far, then, these pieces are akin to Antony's speech over the dead body in *Julius Caesar*, or the speeches at the Banquet in *Macbeth*; hence (3) their style has not the smooth steady flow of the ordinary lyric, but the more broken changeful movement of such poetry as is intended to represent actual speech. (4) It is not merely to embody sentiments and thoughts that these poems were written; quite as vivid and as aesthetically valuable as these, is the impression they give us of the bluff cavalier who speaks them—a typical exemplar of an historic development—and of the various situations in which the poems are supposed to be uttered.

Their *lyrical* character is stamped on the face of these poems by their metrical form, and in the fact that each gives expression to one dominating feeling. Attention need not be drawn to the vigour and dash, both in conception and in style and versification, which are specially congenial to Browning's temperament and art.

I. MARCHING ALONG.

2. **crop-headed.** Unlike the cavaliers, the Puritans wore their hair short; hence also the term "Roundheads."

swing. Hang. Cf. the ordinary imprecation "Go and be hanged."

3. **pressing.** The meaning must not be pressed; the word does not imply here (as it ordinarily does) that any *force* was used in gathering these soldiers.

5. **Marched.** In the first text "marching," as in the choruses of the next two stanzas; the change amended the grammatical structure of the sentence.

7. **Pym.** The parliamentary leader who is familiar to all students of English history, for the prominent part he took in the Petition

of Right, the Impeachments of Strafford and Laud, the Grand Remonstrance, etc. He died in 1843, not long after the outbreak of the Civil War.

8. **parles.** Conferences; the more ordinary form is "parley," though "parle" is frequent in poetry, *e.g.*, *Hamlet*, I., 1.

> In an angry parle
> He smote the sledded Polacks on the Ice.

13-14. **Hampden,** the famous resister of ship-money, whose noble and simple character gives him perhaps the chief place in general estimation among the statesmen of the Long Parliament. He died of a wound received in battle in June, 1643. *Hazelrig* and *Fiennes* were also prominent personages on the Parliamentary side. The former was one of the "Five Members" whom Charles attempted to arrest in Jan., 1642—an event which precipitated the resort to arms. Nathaniel Fiennes was a member of the Long Parliament, a commander of a troop of horse in Essex' army, and later attained an unpleasing notoriety by his surrender of Bristol, of which he was governor.

young Harry. Sir Henry Vane, known as "the younger" (to distinguish him from his father; so styled in the sonnet addressed to him by Milton), once Governor of Massachusetts, member of the Long Parliament, a leader among the Independents, and hence during the earlier period of Cromwell's career a close ally.

15. **Rupert.** Prince Rupert, nephew of Charles I., famous for his dashing exploits as a cavalry leader in the Civil War.

21. **Nottingham.** It was at Nottingham that Charles set up his standard (Aug. 22nd, 1842) at the beginning of hostilities against Parliament. Doubtless the reference is to this event, and hence the allusion serves to give a date to the imaginary incident of the poem.

II. GIVE A ROUSE.

Here the speaker is addressing his comrades who are drinking about him; stanza iii. shows that this speech is conceived as belonging to a much later date in the history of the Civil War than that of the previous poem.

rouse. A deep draught, as frequently in Shakespeare; *e.g.*, *Hamlet*, I., 4:

> The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,
> Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up spring reels;
> And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, etc.

16. **Noll's.** Noll is a nickname for Oliver, contemptuously applied to Oliver Cromwell by his opponents.

III. BOOT AND SADDLE.

When first published this poem had the title "My Wife Gertrude."

Here, we seem to be in a still later era in the war, in a time subsequent to the battle of Naseby (1645) when, after great disasters on the field, the cavaliers were maintaining an obstinate resistance in their scattered strongholds.

5. **asleep as you'd say.** It is early in the morning and the inhabitants seem to be all asleep; but many of the king's partizans, though fearing apparently to show themselves, are listening for the departure of the cavaliers.

10. "Castle Brancepeth" is the subject and "array" the object of the verb "flouts."

Castle Brancepeth. It is not likely that the poet had any particular locality in mind; but there was and is a Castle Brancepeth a few miles from Durham, once the seat of the Nevilles, Earls of Westmoreland. It is mentioned in Wordsworth's *White Doe of Rylstone*:

> Now joy for you who from the towers
> Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear.

11. **laughs.** Says with a laugh "Good fellows," etc.

14-15. **Nay! I've better,** etc. The punctuation shows that this is conceived as being said by "My wife Gertrude."

MY LAST DUCHESS.

My Last Duchess first appeared in the volume of 1842 entitled *Dramatic Lyrics*, which was the third number of the series *Bells and Pomegranates*. Originally under the general title *Italy and France*, it was associated with the poem now called *Count Grismond*: the present poem being, *I, Italy*; the other *II, France*. In *Poems by Robert Browning*, 1849, it appears (as now) independently under its present name. Perhaps the poet felt that the former title implied that the subject was not merely Italian but typically Italian, which may have been more than he intended; wishing, however, to draw attention to the local characteristics, he subjoined "Ferrara" as indicating the

scene of his imaginary situation. Ferrara is a city of Italy on the Po, the seat of the famous Este family, dukes of Ferrara. Under their influence it became a centre of art and culture, and may have been chosen here by the poet as suggesting an environment of aristocratic predominance and artistic refinement fitted to be the setting for his incidents. Byron's apostrophe in *Childe Harold*, iv., stanza 35, suggests something of this nature:

> Ferrara! in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
> Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
> There seems as 'twere a curse upon the seats
> Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
> Of Este, which for many an age made good
> Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
> Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
> Of petty power impell'd, of those who wore
> The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

In exemplification, Byron, in the following stanzas, refers to the story of the poet Tasso, who, having fallen in love with the sister of the Duke, was imprisoned for many years as a madman.

The impropriety of classing this poem among the lyrics was doubtless the cause of its being placed in the final edition of Browning's works, not among the *Dramatic Lyrics* but among the *Dramatic Romances.*

My Last Duchess is an unusually condensed but typical and striking example of Browning's most characteristic mode of representing human life, already discussed,—the dramatic monologue. The fact that, in the dramatic monologue, the external details, the story, place, situation, are not directly stated but left to inference, makes it needful that the student should read the poem with the utmost care so as to catch every hint for interpretation, and fit every detail to form the background which may serve to bring into clearness the significance of the monologue itself. This is specially true in the case of this particular poem. "There is some telling touch," says Mr. Symons, "in every line, an infinitude of cunningly careless details, instinct with suggestion, and an appearance through it all of simple artless ease, such as only the very finest art can give." Such prolonged and careful study will put the reader into a position where he may be able to appreciate the economy and the power through which what might have been a complete five-act tragedy, is flashed upon us in the compass of some fifty lines.

The poem presents the chance utterances, as it were, of the Duke, the chief actor in a story which is indicated (not narrated), as he unveils to a visitor the picture of his late Duchess. The speaker falls

musingly into a rapid survey of his relations with his wife, thereby involuntarily reveals his own character and briefly but sufficiently indicates hers. A man of commanding personality and aristocratic bearing, he possesses the external graces and refinement proper to his high position and long descent; he is, further, a virtuoso, with fine artistic sense and enjoyment of the beautiful; but these have been cultivated as a source of narrow, selfish gratification, apart from all development of the moral and spiritual nature. Accustomed to the utmost deference from all about him, proud, self-centred, and egoistic, his heart is dry as summer dust. When his personal claims, his pride, his sense of conventional propriety collide with the rights of others, he can be, perhaps half-unconsciously, more cruel and more coldly relentless than the primitive savage.

Over against him we catch a vivid glimpse of the fresh, emotional, passionate nature of the unspoiled and inexperienced girl whom, in the bloom of her youthful beauty, he marries. To his arid, cold nature, her finest qualities are an offence. A species of jealousy develops because he cannot reserve her, like the picture, all to himself,—not ordinary jealousy, but jealousy that she should have a life apart from himself, and joys which his worldly and *blasé* nature cannot feel. In the effort to shape this tender spirit into the conventional mould which his worldly artificial notions prescribe, he crushes first the happiness and next the life of his young wife. Then, after a proper interval doubtless, he seeks to fill her place and improve his financial position by another match. It is in connection with this that he shows to the envoy of a Count, for whose daughter's hand he is a suitor, the picture of his late wife—a masterly presentation, not merely of her exquisite beauty, but of that intensity of soul which looks out from her features and is her chief characteristic. This picture is the occasion of the monologue before us.

The versification should be noted. As compared with the usual structure of the pentameter couplet; the metrical peculiarities of this poem have the characteristics of Shakespeare's later as compared with his earlier use of blank verse, *i.e.*, the treatment of the verse is dramatic. The thought is not fitted to the flow of the couplet, with pauses at the ends of the odd lines and stronger pauses at the close of the couplets. The chief pauses, in this poem, are predominantly within the lines; the sense, not the verse, dictates the grouping of the phrases, while the metrical movement, and the recurrence of the rhymes are felt as giving merely a secondary melody to the passage.

My Last Duchess. Every word in the title is significant of the Duke's point of view.

1. He draws back the veil which hides the picture of his late wife, in order that the visitor, whom he is addressing, may see it.

2-4. Note how the feelings of the connoisseur dominate; it is the lover of art who speaks, not the lover of the woman pictured.

3. **Frà Pandolf.** An imaginary artist.

5-12. The passionate soul of his beautiful wife unconsciously reveals itself through the face; in this revelation of the inner spirit, which was natural to her (as the following lines show) there is something repellant to the Duke's sense of propriety,—to that dislike for earnestness and intensity, that love for reserve and conventionality which is characteristic of worldly and fashionable life in all times and places.

6. **by design.** As interpreted by the lines which follow, this indicates that Frà Pandolf is a well-known personage, whose character would preclude any suspicion of special relations between painter and sitter. She is as *soulful* as the Duke is soulless, and all her heart came into her face on very slight occasions, as he goes on to exemplify.

9-10. Note how the words in parentheses indicate his value for the picture as a picture, and further that curious desire to keep one's sources of pleasure to oneself, even when the imparting of them would not cost anything—a trait which, in miniature, is familiar to us in selfish and spoiled children.

12-13. **not the first,** etc. Here as in ll. 1, 5, 9 and 10, we have hints, carelessly dropped, as it were, for filling in the background and action,—details of gesture and expression such as we should see with our eyes in the actual drama of the theatre.

13-15. **Sir, ... cheek.** The first indication of that peculiar dog-in-the-manger jealousy which is a salient peculiarity of the speaker.

21. **She had,** etc. He falls into a half reverie, somewhat forgetting his auditor, and making, for his own behoof, an apology for his conduct to his wife—not that he thinks it in his heart blameworthy, but even in the most callous there is a vague uneasiness caused by a remorse, even when not importunate enough to be consciously recognized as remorse.

25-31. How admirably suggestive of the Duchess, are these touches for the imagination! This combination of reserve and suggestiveness is one great source of the spell which Browning casts over his readers.

25. **My favour.** Some gift of his—a jewel perhaps.

31, fol. The broken structure indicates the difficulty which even he feels in justifying himself. To justify one's conduct in words often reveals unsuspected possibilities of criticism.

33. The Este family was one of the oldest in Europe.

34-35. **Who'd . . . trifling?** The question seems to indicate that there is something in the expression of the person addressed which shows to the Duke, that he is not carrying his listener with him.

45. **I gave commands.** What the commands were the reader may, if he pleases, determine for himself; the idea that he ordered her to be put to death seems to the present editor wholly out of keeping with the rest of the poem. According to Professor Corson, an enquiry addressed to the poet as to what the commands were, served to show that Browning had not himself thought of the matter.

46-47. **There she . . . alive.** This brings the main body of the poem to a close: what remains throws additional light on the character of the speaker, by indicating the circumstances in which the preceding lines have been spoken.

47-48. The two leave the picture to rejoin the company down stairs.

I repeat, etc. Evidently, then, a conversation was broken off, to exhibit the picture,—a conversation in which arrangements in regard to dowry, etc., were being made with a person (to whom the whole poem is addressed) who has come to negotiate the marriage of the Duke with the daughter of a Count. All this is significant of the Duke's character.

53. **Nay, we'll go,** etc. They evidently reach the top of the staircase on their way to the "company below," and the Duke politely refuses to take the precedence which his guest, belonging of course to a lower social grade, naturally offers.

54. **Notice Neptune,** etc. As they pass the Duke draws attention to a sculptured group wrought by the famous artist, Claus of Innsbruck, with the conscious pride of the possessor of a great work of art.

Claus of Innsbruck. This is a purely imaginary personage invented by the poet. *Innsbruck* is the capital of Tyrol.

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

First printed in *Hood's Magazine*, August 1844; reprinted with minor changes and some additions (55 and 56, 57 and 58, 63 and 64, 67 and 68, 71 and 72), in *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1845; in 1863 ll. 37 and 38 were added.

The lines contain 4 stresses each; the number of syllables, in other words the character of the foot, varies. The poem is a parable,—an imaginary legend told to exemplify a truth.

51. **dight.** Antiquated and poetical for 'decked.'

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

First published in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, No. III. of *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1845. In this volume there were included along with this poem and under its present title, two other poems, viz.: *Here's to Nelson's Memory*, and the poem now called *Home-Thoughts, From the Sea*. The poem is evidently an outcome of Browning's Italian journey of 1838.

The poem expresses marvellously the charm and freshness of an English spring,—a charm unparalleled, as English-speaking people at least feel, in other lands. The poet feels it the more keenly in virtue of the contrast afforded by the very different character of Italian nature—a character which is suggested, for the reader, in the single touch of the last line.

7. **chaffinch.** Mr. Burroughs says in his *Impressions of Some English Birds*: "Throughout the month of May, and probably during all the spring months, the chaffinch makes two-thirds of the music that ordinarily greets the ear as one walks or drives about the country."

10. **whitethroat.** A summer visitant in England, builds in low bushes or among weeds.

14. **thrush.** The song thrush or throstle, one of the finest of British song-birds. Wordsworth speaks of "how blithe the throstle sings"; Tennyson associates it with early spring when

> The blackbirds have their wills,
> The throstles too.

The English naturalist, J. G. Wood, describes its song as peculiarly rich, mellow and sustained, and as remarkable for the variety of its notes. On the other hand an American, Burroughs, says: "Next to

the chaffinch in volume of song, and perhaps in some localities surpassing it, is the song thrush. . . . Its song is much after the manner of our brown thrasher, made up of vocal altitudes and poses. It is easy to translate its strain into various words or short ejaculatory sentences. . . . "Kiss her, kiss her; do it, do it; be quick, be quick; stick her to it, stick her to it; that was neat, that was neat; that will do." [N.B.—Burroughs' rendering indicates how the bird sings each song "twice over."] . . . Its performance is always animated, loud, and clear, but never, to my ear, melodious, as the poets so often have it. . . . It is a song of great strength and unbounded good cheer; it proceeds from a sound heart and merry throat. (*Some Impressions of English Birds* in *Fresh Fields.*)

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY.

First appeared in *Men and Women*, 1855. Like *My Last Duchess*, it is a study of the Italian aristocracy. The loss of political freedom, as well as of commercial prosperity from the 16th century onward deprived the higher classes in Italy, more particularly the aristocracy, of the natural outlet for their activities in public affairs. The consequent narrowness and triviality of their lives had its effect upon character. An intellectual and spiritual dry-rot set in. Instead of the great statesmen, preachers, scholars, artists of an earlier date, we have the *virtuosi;* the highest ideal attained was a dilettante curiosity and superficial taste. Seriousness and depth vanished. In the familiar characterization of Italy in his *Traveller*, Goldsmith gives a sketch of this condition of things:

> Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
> By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;
> From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
> An easy compensation seem to find.
> Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
> The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade,
> Processions form'd for piety and love,
> A mistress or a saint in every grove.
> By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd
> The sports of children satisfy the child.
> Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,
> Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;
> While low delights, succeeding fast behind
> In happier meanness occupy the mind.

Browning likes to bring out character and principles by collision with some trivial event or fact, to show the soul revealing itself in its attitude towards the little, no less than towards the great. So, in the present poem, we have a delightful bit of humorous self-revelation on the part of an Italian person of quality, in his feeling with regard to country and city life respectively,—"a masterpiece of irony and of description." We note the pervading humour, the genial ease, the dramatic vivacity of the style, the appropriate and changeful movement of the verses, the very brief yet efficient sketches of scenes in Italian city and country.

1. Even the enforced economies of the Italian person of quality are characteristic of the class he represents.

4. **by Bacchus.** *Per Bacco* is a common Italian exclamation.

10. **my own.** Supply "skull" from line 8.

11, fol. The limitations of his aesthetic nature are shown in what he admires.

18-25. In these exquisite suggestions of scenery there is more of Browning than of the 'Italian person of quality.'

23. **scarce risen three fingers well.** The wheat is scarcely well up to three fingers in height.

26. The fountains are frequent and very attractive features of Italian towns; every traveller is impressed by the fountains of Rome.

29. **conch.** A marine shell.

39. **diligence.** Stage-coach.

42. **Pulcinello.** A grotesque character in Italian comedy, a buffoon. *Punch*, the hump-backed fellow in the puppet-show, is a derivative.

44. **liberal thieves.** The prejudices of his class lead him to identify thieves with persons of liberal political opinions.

46. **crown and lion.** The Duke's coat-of-arms; it is needless to seek for an Italian duke with such insignia; the poet evidently does not desire that the locality of his poem should be identified with any particular place.

47, fol. suggest the literary coteries that cultivated both prose and poetry in the days of Italian decadence. Those familiar with Milton's life will recall his intercourse with Florentine academies of this nature.

48. **Dante** (1265-1321). Boccaccio (1313-1375), Petrarch (1304-1374), are the three greatest names in Italian literature; St. Jerome belongs to the 4th century A.D., was the most learned and eloquent of the

Fathers. This incongruous union of writers so different as the authors of the *Divine Comedy*, the *Decameron*, and the *Sonnets to Laura*, with the great Christian theologian and the Roman orator stamps sufficiently the literary pretensions of the writer of the sonnet.

50. **he.** The Rev. Don So-and-So; 'than he had ever before preached.'

51. The last four lines of the stanza give the crowning instance of the utter frivolity of mind that belongs to the speaker. Even a religious procession means nothing more to him than a bit of noise and bustle to fill the emptiness of his meaningless life and vacant mind. These lines cap the climax also of the poet's skill in treating his theme.

52. The seven swords are emblematic of the seven dolours of our Lady of Sorrow. Cf. the words of Simeon to Mary: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also" (Luke ii., 35).

56. It has long been a favourite expedient for raising a municipal revenue in various cities on the Continent, to tax all provisions entering the city bounds.

59, fol. The speaker inspired with enthusiasm for the pleasures he is talking of, sees in imagination [it seems to be imagination, the touches in the beginning, *e.g.* "*yon* cypress" of line 32, seem to show that he is in the country, as the state of his purse also makes probable] one of those religious processions which he so much admires, and ends his talk with a delightful outburst of regretful enthusiasm.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

First published in the volume entitled *Men and Women*, 1855. It was of course written during the poet's residence in Italy, and the description is redolent of the characteristics of certain Italian scenes where the shattered remnants of past ages (associated with the historic movement and the animation of other times) have been incorporated into her own works by the softening hand of Nature.

The poem is admirable for the way in which it expresses the quiet charm of the present scene, and the eager animation of the past; but, above all, in the way in which everything is made to contribute to the expression of the intense passion of the love story, which gathers force as the speaker proceeds and culminates in the dramatic summing up of the final line.

"*Love Among the Ruins* is constructed in a triple contrast; the endless pastures prolonged to the edge of sunset, with their infinity of calm, are

contrasted with the vast and magnificent animation of the city which once occupied the plain and the mountain slopes. The lover keeps at arm's length from his heart and brain, what yet fills them all the while, here in this placid pasture-land, is one vivid point of intensest life; here where once were the grandeur and tumult of the enormous city is that which in a moment can abolish for the lover all its stories and its shames. His eager anticipation of meeting his beloved, face to face and heart to heart, is not sung, after the manner of Burns, as a jet of unmingled joy; he delays his rapture to make its arrival more entirely rapturous; he uses his imagination to check and enhance his passion; and the poem, though not a simple cry of the heart, is entirely true as a rendering of emotion which has taken imagination into its service." (Dowden).

The versification is peculiar and gives a touch of that oddity and seeming caprice which belong to Browning; but when the reader has surmounted the initial unfamiliarity, the movement seems effective and appropriate, "beautifully adapted," as Mr. Symons remarks, "to the tone and rhythm—the quietness and fervent meditation—of the subject."

2. **Miles and miles.** Adverbial modifier of "smiles."

9. **its prince,** etc. The relative is omitted; the clause is adjectival to "capital."

15. **certain rills.** Again supply the relative, "slopes which certain," etc.

17. **they.** The slopes of verdure.

21. These may be a reminiscence of Homer's description of Thebes in Egypt (*Iliad*, ix., 381), which had a hundred gates.

29. **guessed alone.** The vestiges of the city are so far obliterated that the existence of the city can only be conjectured.

39. **caper.** A trailing shrub which is found in Mediterranean countries, especially growing in dry places over rocks and walls.

49. The first four stanzas are introductory, we now draw towards the real theme.

63. The ruins of the various objects enumerated here form a conspicuous feature in Italian landscapes, especially the causeys, the old Roman paved roads, and aqueducts.

causeys. The older spelling (see *e.g.*, *Paradise Lost*, x., 415); the modern form "causeway" is due to popular etymology; the word really comes from the Low Latin *calciare*, to make a road with lime or mortar.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

Published in *Men and Women* (1855), it was written in 1848, see letter quoted below. This poem is of a somewhat exceptional character among Browning's pieces; it is, on the face of it, an expression of personal feeling; the feeling—a desire for soothing and calming influence with its pathetic tone—is not common in Browning; nor is the slow and steady movement of the verse.

Fano is a town on the Adriatic, some 30 miles north of Ancona. In the church of St. Augustine there is a picture known as *L'Angelo Custode* (the Guardian Angel), by Guercino (1590-1666) which "represents an angel standing with outstretched wings beside a little child. The child is half kneeling on a kind of pedestal, while the angel joins its hands in prayer; its gaze is directed to the sky, from which cherubs look down." The painting is not ranked high by the connoisseurs, but Browning and his wife were attracted by its simple pathos. Mrs. Browning writes in one of her letters (see Mrs. Orr's *Life of Browning*, p. 159): "Murray, the traitor, sent us to Fano as 'a delightful summer residence for an English family,' and we found it uninhabitable from the heat, vegetation scorched into paleness, the very air swooning in the sun, and the gloomy looks of the inhabitants sufficiently corroborative of their words that no drop of rain or dew ever falls there during the summer. . . . Yet the churches are very beautiful, and a divine picture of Guercino's is worth going all that way to see. . . . We fled from Fano after three days, and finding ourselves cheated of our dream of summer coolness, resolved on substituting for it what the Italians call *un bel giro*. So we went to Ancona—a striking sea-city, holding up against the brown rocks and elbowing out the purple tides, beautiful to look upon."

7. **retrieve.** Rather unusual use of the word; to bring back to a proper state; so we talk of 'retrieving one's fortunes.'

37. **Alfred.** Alfred Domett (1811-1887) an early friend of Browning's, himself a poet. At the time this poem was written Domett was in New Zealand, whither he migrated in 1842, and where he became a prominent public man. His departure from London to New Zealand is commemorated in Browning's poem *Waring*.

51. **endured some wrong,** at the hands of the critics, presumably.

55. **Wairoa.** A river and arm of the sea on the west-coast of the North Island of New Zealand.

PROSPICE.

First published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1864; appeared in the same year in *Dramatis Personæ*. We cannot be wrong in connecting this poem with the death of Mrs. Browning in 1861. "*Prospice* has all the impetuous blood and fierce lyric fire of militant manhood. It is a cry of passionate exultation and exultation in the very face of death; a war-cry of triumph over the last of foes." (*Symonds*). It may be compared with *Crossing the Bar*: the passionate fire, the energy and love of struggle are as characteristic of Browning as are the dignity, grace and perfection in the other poems are of Tennyson. It is noteworthy that the point of view in *Crossing the Bar* is easily comprehended and commends itself to the ordinary feelings of humanity; that of *Prospice* is more individual and remoter from average sympathies.

Prospice is the Latin imperative meaning 'Look forward.'

1. **to feel**, etc. This is in apposition to "death"; a detail of the sort of thing one fears.

9. **the summit attained.** The ultimate point of our earthly career.

19. **life's arrears.** Whatever is yet unpaid of pain, etc.